

➔ AWAY FROM ➔
NEWSPAPERDOM
✻ AND OTHER POEMS ✻



BY BERNARD McEVOY
WITH DECORATIONS BY G.A. REID. R.C.A.

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AND OTHER POEMS

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BY

BERNARD McEVOY

WITH DECORATIONS BY G. A. REID, R.C.A.

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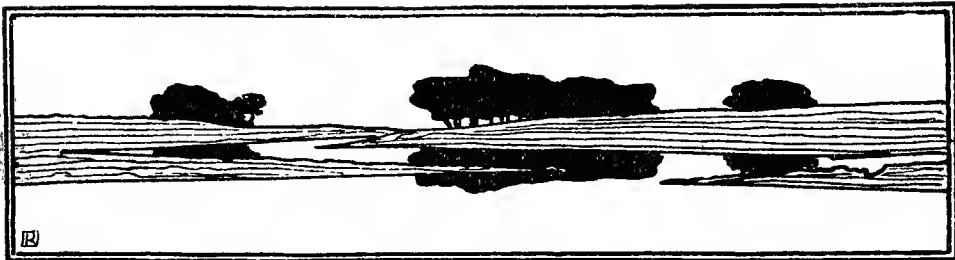
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Away from Newspaperdom

TO MY WIFE

To you and to our son across the sea,
Who came three thousand miles to spend with us
His long vacation, these I dedicate :
Like wild flowers homeward brought by wayfarers ;
Like catches whistled when the band has passed ;
Like sunflecked cloudlets when the sun has set.



AWAY FROM NEWSPAPERDOM

Prologue

Hurry the pencil on and let it fly
Across the manuscript ; lay scissors down
And put away the paste. A final word
To "point" the "moral and adorn" the "tale,"
Then leave your thoughts for type's arbitrament
(Cold lead may mutilate, but cannot kill).
Now for the street, the station, and the rail !
I never rail at rails—but rather, bless
The twin steel pathway to the possible,
Mysterious always where it farthest blends
In dim perspective. Heaven be bless'd for rails !
And bless'd be every patient engineer
Who helped their strong tame dragon to evolve—
From dark abysmal depths of ore and fire—
To where the creature, gently breathing, stands
Controll'd, though monstrous ; who, in half an hour,
Turns us from citizens to villagers ;



Prologue.

Bears us from stone-paved streets to quiet woods,
Gives us the hum of bees for that of trade,
And to our mother nature brings us back
As though he loved us : till the landscape sweet
Grows beauteous and more tender in the sun
That westering gleams across it ; wild flowers bloom
Close by the rail, and the sweet air of fields
Welcomes our coming with its wholesome breath.

A moment and the throbbing train is gone
And dwindles out of sight around the curve ;
Then each one, blythe and happy, seeks his home.
And there are happy waiting faces, too,
To welcome us ; hands that are thrust in ours
With tender trust, and little feet keep time
Beside our path. And some there are that wait
For those who never more will come again.

Happy the man who, as each eve comes round,
Can leave behind him thus his load of care
Like the dark cloud that o'er the city lies ;
Happy the man that, nurtured by such joys,
Takes up his load again with added strength ;
Who in such interchange can pass his days
Till the Eternal City looms in sight,
And he walks towards it through the fields of Heaven !



The Orchard

From the verandah stretched a wilderness—
An orchard it had been ; an old gray house,
Upon its verge, silent and empty stood
Fronting the road, with darkened window panes—
The home of some old settler that was dead—
Its log-built sides weathered by many a storm.
The scattered apple trees were old and gnarled :
Grass grew around them, rankly ; wandering cows
Came through the broken fence and brows'd at will ;
And here and there a heap of brushwood lay
As if once gathered for the winter fire,
Gone out forever—for no pennon blue
Waves from the chimney now—the flag of home,
Of fireside, and of kindred—all are gone !



The Orchard.

Yet to my city eyes—tired of prim tidiness
And masterpieces of the gardener's art—
Scroll'd beds, and ribbon borders, and what not—
The formal tasks of Adam's latest son—
This wilderness was sweet, and sweet its flowers
That grew in sunny corners. Those old trees
Within the network of their boughs enmeshed
My truant fancy, till I seem'd to see
The long and silent pilgrimage of years,
And to my spirit came, with airy tread
Those who had lived and worked in years before.
O Canada ! The child of faith and toil :
Fruit of the labours of the pioneers
Who from the forest hewed thy fertile fields,
Forget not those who in a bygone day
Freely gave thee their lives ; who in the bush
First set up homes and built the sacred fire
That burns here still ; who, far from home and friends,
Made here a conquest that surprised the world !

Nothing is commonplace except to him
Who is himself prosaic. Alpine views
Make poets weep, but only bore the fool ;
And poets find more poetry in the dust
Than dullards find in Alps. Thus through the whole
Sweet realm of nature, 'tis the poet's eye
Alone that sees, his brain alone that knows—
Though in imaginings the poet lives,
And these denied him he must sink and die.
So with our orchard : seen with common eyes
'Twas but a rood or two of grass and weeds,

The Orchard.

With a few apple trees ; yet now and then
It took the shape and hue of fairyland :
The changing lights of summer afternoons
Filled it with beauty, till we sat and gazed
Peaceful, content ; and gather'd fruitage there
Sweeter than ever grew on mortal trees !

How changed our orchard as the seasons sped !
How changed its spaces as the hours went by !
For not alone did Spring and Summer write
Their messages on leaf, and branch, and fruit ;
Autumn proclaim her presence ; Winter say
“ I'm here ” ; but every hour ticked by the clock
Had character and graces of its own.
For every beauteous spot on this fair earth
Has many aspects—is not twice the same
In the same day. Life's rich variety
Informs it with a difference. The morn
Has mystic pearly grays that noon has not,
And evening sings romantic lullabies
'Neath every tree. When falls the glooming night
What mystery grows in every shadow'd glade !
So responds nature to our souls, that change
With every day. To be the stagnant same
Through all the year is to be commonplace—
To be a man of wood—an image, graved
From a dull block, and not a living soul.

O sweetest time of orchard blossoming !
When odours faint and sweet were in the air,
And pinky buds unfolded robes of white
That deck'd the trees as if for Whitsuntide ;

The Orchard.

O richest time when glow'd the noonday heat,
And bees were busy and their songs were sung
Above us as we sat ; and gayest butterflies
Came wavering o'er the green, and settled here,
And settled there ; and sweet caressing winds
Blew showering petals down on sweetest turf,
And golden-throated orioles blithely sang !
How sweet your memory, now that winter's snows
Lie bald and bare around us, and the trees
Pray with uplifted arms to frigid skies !

The time of fruitage came,
When, rounding on the trees, the blushing spheres
Grew bigger while we slept, and the wind's hand
Plucked here and there and strewed them on the turf ;
And sometimes in the night, when all was still,
We heard them fall upon the grassy earth,
Attracted by the mother whence they sprang ;
Then, silence ; and the mystery of night.
O golden year ! that such sweet treasures poured
Into our laps ! And village children came,
And, gathering them, went happy to their homes.





The Church

Back from the dusty road, midst whispering trees,
The church stood, sheltered in a calm retreat—
A grassy space amid the peaceful fields.
Behind it ran the rail, and near it lay
The parsonage in which its builder died.
So here, between two roads—the turnpike one,
The road of steam the other—rose a roof
Sacred to Heaven—to which all roads may tend.
Yet so sequestered was its neighborhood,
The bird would nest unfrighted, and the flowers
Bloom there unplucked within this vale of rest.
On Sunday morning quiet broke the day,
And for long hours no trains went thundering by ;
A peaceful sky of blue, unvexed by smoke,
Hung o'er the scene ; far off the city's noise ;
Far off the cares and business of the week.
No loaded wains were on the well-worn road ;
No sound of labour came across the fields,
As through the silent peace of things at rest
We walked to church. The happy butterfly,
Whose life's a holiday, alighted near,

The Church.

Or fluttered idly by from flower to flower ;
In the tall pines the wind sang. O'er the fields
The landscape quivered in the glowing heat
And all the time was sweet. A holy peace
Brooded o'er all. And then the church bell rang.
What is it in this clangour wakes the soul
And bids it turn to thoughts of prayer and God ?
Is it that through the landscape of our life,
Floating benignly over hills of years,
There come the vibrant sound of other bells
That once we heard—or that our fathers heard—
Calling persistently to prayer ? They say, who know,
A sound once flung upon the firmament
Echoes unceasingly around the world ;
So may these throbbing tones of other days
Echo within our souls, and wake again
Whene'er we hear the sound of Sabbath bells.

I love the good old Church of England
That wheresoe'er her roving children dwell
Builds there a House of God and bids them pray
The self-same prayers their fathers prayed of yore
I love her ancient calm and piety,
Her noble grace, her grand simplicity,
Her disregard of modern cavillings,
Her decent forms that keep, from week to week
And year to year, an open path to Heaven,
And teach in plain, strong, Anglo-Saxon words
Man's duty to his brother and his God.

The Church.

But hush ! the creaking bell-rope stops ; the bell
Gives one more stroke, then silently it sways.
The organ's tones float o'er the assembled crowd
And cease. In firm, full, manly tones
The parson calls his people to their prayers ;
And then the chant rings out ; the ancient Psalms
Are read once more. For sacred use and wont
Hold here their sway and calm the fevered soul.

There are who love the new,
And evermore would seek some changeful strain ;
Who entertainment more than worship crave ;
Who tire of iterated liturgy
As gourmands tire of bread. But simple folk—
Like those that kneel around us—know full well
The cares of life, and, hungry for the food
That comes from Heaven, eat and are satisfied.
They tread the humble way their fathers trod
And find, like they did, that it leads to God.

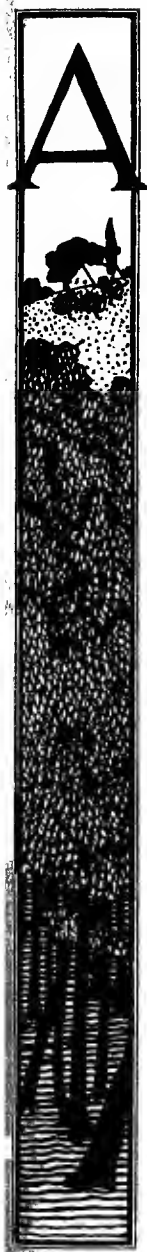
Still stands the Pulpit as in days of old
When mouldering fanes were new. The stone decays ;
The preacher's office lives : for though men scoff,
They yet would hear of heaven, and hell, and God.
And still the Voice that spoke in ancient times
Through seers and prophets, speaks to-day. Men preach
As best they may when rings the Sabbath bell,
For 'tis their office to. The world would stare
At one who said " I cannot speak to-day " ;
" The sacred oracles to me are dumb."

The Church.

So flowing speech is valued, and the art
Of sermon-making, whether enriched or not
By Inspiration. So the priest, whose words
Come like a rapid brook swelled by the rains,
Never fails hearers. Preachers too there are
Who in their dire conceit do map out God.
Others, with vain philosophy, attempt
To solve the unsoluble ; others still
Scribble errata on the sacred page,
Bringing foot-rules to mystic poetry ;
Testing with mathematics Holy Writ,
And feeding souls with dull chronologies.
But in the little church of which I write,
Spirit felt spirit and with joy adored.



The Bush



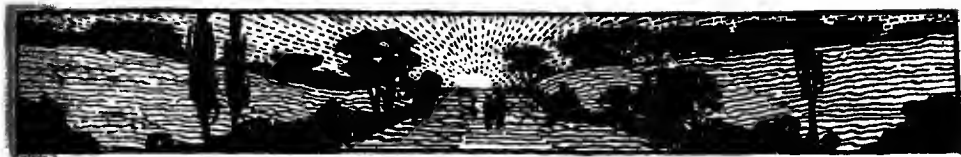
A few rods from our dwelling lay a vale
Filled up with trees and gloomy with their shade,
'Neath which crept, lazily, a sinuous creek ;
We went there skirting tracts of waving growth,
And, later, boldly crossed the stubble fields—
Where leaped the sudden grasshopper—to find
From ardent autumn suns a grateful shade.
We went there, too, when evening shadows fell,
And lost our way in tangled glimmering paths,
Or sat in twilight on the fallen trees.

Not in our cities breathe the bygone times—
The early labors of the pioneers—
Pavements are tombstones of the historic past
Without inscriptions. But in these dim woods
A vagrant fancy sees the gleaming axe
Wielded by arms long moulder'd into dust,
And hears arboreal monarchs downward fall.
So here the giant tree-stump rotting stands,
Yet shows the axe-marks on his mossy top
That once were white beneath the woodman's steel.
A moment, and the years come into view.
When the brave emigrant left home and friends
And came across the sea with eager hope,
Yet many a fear ; built here his humble hut
And, midst green silences, began to toil.
This bush is but an island midst the tith
Of well-worked fields ; but in those patient days
A sea of forest hemmed the settler in—
His clearing was an island—steady, slow,
He drove the rolling sea of forest back.

The Bush.

Ere dawn he was astir, and when the day
Broke o'er the serried immemorial pines
It lighted his stern toil. No map had he
To show what lay beyond his narrow bound ;
No railroad whistle sounded in his ears :
He lived alone ; far off from everywhere.
Only at night in his brief hours of sleep
Came dreams of home and of the dear Old Land :
He saw in dreams once more his mother's face,
Once more his father's blessing he received ;
Then waked by the sad silence of the woods,
He knew that those he lov'd were far away !





The Sunsets

The gorgeous burning day has end at last,
And the sun sinks. Yet far, and wide, and high
He writes his farewells on the arching heaven,
While black—like sentinels—stand the silent trees
In shadowed mystery. A peaceful light,
Neither of day or night, encompasses
Our path, while we—like wand'ring children, hushed
By something that they cannot comprehend—
Look upward, questioning, yet fearing not,
And gaze at reddening glories in the west
With silent worship. Then, the village passed,
Heaven seems to lie beyond the distant wood ;
The world is left behind, the day forgot ;
The cool reviving air blows o'er the fields.
Soon turns the landscape from a group of farms
To fancy's theatre. Gone the garish day !
Gone the necessities of sordid life !
Before the noble drama of the skies
The daily farce of living shrinks and dies.



The Village Street

Stores where one was not hurried ; quiet cots,
And more pretentious houses lined the Street
That lay along the valley. Various build
Marked all the dwellings, and their diverse dates
Were set forth by their style. The clapboard shed ;
Houses of brick ; the log hut in the rear—
Once dwelt in, now a barn—all these were there
And gardens gay with flowers, and apple trees,
And many a rural charm. The country round
Supplied good custom : people drove for miles
Through long straight roads to this their market place ;
Unharnessed at the inn ; discussed the crops,
The prices and the weather—sometimes politics ;
And when they went to buy they bought with care,
As those whose money was but hardly earned.
Nor were the patient, kindly storekeepers
Averse to the long chaffer. All was there
From shoestrings to silk products of the loom ;
From nails to ploughs ; from buttons to a churn.
The stores were marts of miscellaneousness
In which one felt at home, and roamed around ;
Talked here and there, and gained the country style ;
Forgot the date—it seemed like years ago
Till the train whistle sounded through the vale
And spoke the steam and hurry of the time
In far-off cities ; then for a little time
The place grew lively, but it soon relapsed
Into its wholesome charm of antique peace.



The Village Street.

But evening was the time to see the Street
In all its glory. Oil lamps here and there
Dotted the darkness. The farmers' work
Being over for the day they stood in groups—
Slow talking; sometimes silent. Curling smoke
Rose from their pipes. The touch of quiet night
Seemed sweet to them after the glare of sun,
Patiently borne throughout the live-long day.
And now and then a dainty flitting form—
Some young Canadian beauty—passed along
With bird-like step and such a pair of eyes
As well might set a rustic's heart on fire;
(For everywhere is told the tale of love);
And maidens fair as the Dominion knows
Uphold our standard of fair womanhood.

Nor must I fail to tell
Of how the barber's shop was visited,
The object—conversation. He who sat
There to be barbed was but a mild excuse
For curiosity. Neighbours' affairs
Were duly canvassed: for in village life
They love their neighbours' business as their own.
Still, in the stores, by blinking oil lamps' light,
Business went gravely on till bed time came,
And one by one the echoing footsteps died,
And o'er the street fell dark and peaceful night.





The River

Come with me to the river, by this road that falls
Ever to lower levels, till a wooden bridge
Stretches its length across the devious stream ;
Then climb the fence and let us lose ourselves
In the umbrageous growth upon the bank,
While through the openings in the shading leaves
We glimpse the verdurous flats that flank the marge,
And see the water shining in the sun,
And rippling o'er the shallows. In our ears
The steady waterfall below the mill
Makes sweetest music. This hot afternoon
A sleepy quiet overhangs the scene
That well might lull to slumber, could our eyes
Forget the sylvan sweetness of the vale,
Forget the bosky trees of various green,
The rich grass of the marshes, and the blue
Of the deep sky—reflected here and there
In still calm reaches where the water lies
Deep and translucent, save when a trout jumps
Or zephyr ruffles.

Later still



Come with me through the village. Cross with me
The lower bridge. Come when the sun has set,
But left the sky all glorious; look up stream,
And let the picture grow into your brain
As it has grown in mine. I close my eyes
At any time, and lo! the silhouette
Of the old mill against the amber sky;
The colours on the pool, as if a path
Of iridescent gold and gems led on
To some unearthly glorious land of light,
Where mortal pain and sorrow could not dwell.

A sacred splendour fills this valley fair
Through which the river flows. A mystery
Of tender beauty dwells in every grove,
As though the spirits of each summer past,
And every spring and autumn lingered there
Whispering sweet memories to the soul that hears
Nature's fine melodies. Yet here, remote,
Fancy hears murmurs of the ocean's wave;
They speak, these ripples of an inland stream,
Of the Atlantic's vast immensity.
And thus our lives, hemmed in by inland shores
Expand at last into the Eternal Sea!

Epilogue.

The years pass, one by one—the summers come,
Bestow their flowers and fruit, then fade away
Like rose leaves dear in memory's scented vase,
That but recall the beauty that is gone.
But O ! my friends who know this home of mine,
Think of me gently when in time to come
You call to mind how we have sat beneath
These spreading trees. If I have passed
Into the spaces of the unknown night,
Remember me with kindness ; say that I
Was one to whom sweet Nature kindly spoke,
And told her joys and sorrows—sometimes breathed
Her fondest love, in words I could not tell !



ANSELMO AND BERNARDINE

Characters

Anselmo, a painter.

The Duke of Montecchino, an Italian Connoisseur.

Terence, Anselmo's groom.

Bernardine, niece of Montecchino.

Dorothy, an old nurse.

Ellen, a cook.

Joan, a serving maid.

Villagers, Fishermen, etc.



Anselmo and Bernardine

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE.

*SCENE I.—Anselmo's Studio, Waynflete Hall,
Cardiganshire.*

ANSELMO.

The night comes on, child, put away your brush,
We have worked long enough. The day was young
When we began ; and now the evening star
Hangs in the firmament.

BERNARDINE.

A most auspicious star ! Rememberest thou
The night I first awoke to love and thee ?
The storm that smote the earth and sea had passed,
The angry heaven had cleared its brow and smiled—
And so the clouds had left my fever'd brain.
I, waking, found our ancient Dorothy
Bathing my brows, and chafing my cold hands.
'Twas twilight ; through the window as I lay
I saw the evening star. And soon you came,
Anselmo : bent on me your kindly eyes,
In which I saw a heaven of trust and love ;

Anselmo and Bernardine.

And then I sank in sleep and dreamt again—
Dreamt that I was an angel—you and I
Walked through sweet fields of tender grass and flowers,
The heartening sun above us.

ANSELMO.

'Twas a dear omen, child ! Five happy years
Have passed since then, and each has happier grown !

BERNARDINE.

Why do you call me child ? I'm woman grown :
Nay, but to-day I found a gray hair glistening
Among my gipsy locks of raven black !

ANSELMO.

There might be more than one ; that night of doom
That brought you to me ended years of nights
That well might age you. What a fate it was
That broke your fettering chain ! All through that day
I had been restless, nor could paint nor read.
Conscious of some impending destiny,
I took the road that leads down to the shore,
And there, unquiet, paced beside the sea
That ever higher rose as broke the storm.
The lightning flashed, and the loud thunder rolled,
Yet that but calmed me. Then I saw your ship
Come driving on straight for the pitiless rocks :
Beheld a something floating on the waves—
Now rising, now engulfed, and, caring not
Whether I lived or died, dashed through the surf
And rescued you as by a miracle.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

Your flowing hair was floating seaweed like
Upon the storm drift ; grasping it, I turned
And fought for life with that wild murderous sea,
Until I drew you from its desperate clutch,
Thank Heaven !

BERNARDINE.

I, only, saved from that unlucky ship !
'Twas a strange birth, yet then my life began :
The years that went before were chaos—worse,
Were living death, when he that banned my life
And tried to bend me to his purposes :
Seemed a Mephisto in his direful strength.
And yet I thought I loved him : he was kind
Once ; I, a careless-hearted loving girl.

ANSELMO.

Think not of him ; he sleeps beneath the waves.

BERNARDINE.

'Tis quickly said, yet sometimes when I think
Of those green ocean caves, I see him rise
And bend on me a stern and fleshless gaze,
And then he turns and sinks into the deep.

ANSELMO.

Think not so dolefully, my Bernardine ;
The sea is deep, and in its mighty heart
Great currents pulse and throb, and that which sinks
Rolls onward, ceaseless, on the undertow ;
Wanders athwart the wide meridians
Into strange distances of ocean depths.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

So our past lives, that sink in deeps of Time,
Are carried ever further from our gaze ;
Even the gold and pearls that decked them pass
Into the limbo of forgotten things ;
So Bernardine, we'll live and love to-day !

BERNARDINE.

I thought you cold
The first three years I lived here. You, apart,
Lived for your art and books, and seemed, sometimes,
Afraid of me ; filled with distrust of me.

ANSELMO.

My Bernardine, I was an anchorite.
I had no pleasant memories of your sex ;
Nay, hated them ; therefore had shut me up
In the retirement of this hermitage,
Far from the roads that throb like arteries ;
Far from the gadding fashions of the time ;
And here, where ancient trees their shadows throw
Across the mossy turf, I found relief.
My world was shut in by the boundaries
Of this far-spreading park. The dappled deer,
Meek-eyed and timid, fed from out my hand.
I sought no news of town or parliament,
The sleepy caw of rooks was sweeter far
Than echoes of great speeches ; babbling brooks
Than talk of clubs, or ball-rooms. Once a month,
Perhaps, some caller came to see my work,
Wondering that he whose fame the world had known
—I speak it humbly—lived a buried life ;
But there—'twas resurrected when you came !

Anselmo and Bernardine.

BERNARDINE.

How great I thought you—so I think you, still—
But with a difference. Now I speak to you,
Fearlessly bold, and look into your eyes;
Yet it was with a timid, fearful heart
I told you I had studied art in Rome.
And you, with a keen look that searched me through
Seemed then at last to see me; for till then
You had not deigned, I think; you were so rapt
With classic women, one of flesh and blood
Seemed poor and commonplace.

ANSELMO.

Those pouting lips I'll kiss if thus you jeer!

BERNARDINE.

Confess that I was here three years before you knew
Me worth the knowing. Be just, Anselmo.

ANSELMO.

Well, if you will, I do. Is it not strange
That, self-engrossed, we miss the noble grace
Of our environment? Let Death but come
With his enmarbling touch to those we know,
We see them beautiful. It was Life, not Death
That showed me thee, my dearest—it was Love.

BERNARDINE.

I'd loved you long before. Dwelling apart
In my high turret-chambers that your grace

Anselmo and Bernardine.

Endowed me with—call it the museum
In which you stowed the curious specimen
You'd rescued from the deep.

ANSELMO.

Hold! I protest; call it the fairy palace
To which the princess did betake herself.

BERNARDINE.

Dwelling apart, I say, I watched you oft
From my retreat. A happy life I led
Those three long years. My maid and Dorothy
Tended me well. And when that lawyer came
With those grave documents of evidence
That I was heiress to ten thousand pounds
Duly invested; like a fairy tale
All seemed.

ANSELMO. (*aside*)

Thank God, she does not guess—good lawyer that!

BERNARDINE.

Then I began to paint, enjoining Dorothy
She should not tell you. Then I stole at night
Into your studio. My shaded lamp
Showed me your glorious work; I nearly dropt!
The things I had imagined, there were limned,
The things I'd dreamed of, there were bodied forth
With master hand. I crept, disheartened, back;
Burnt my crude studies; put away my paints,
And threw myself with sobs upon my bed.
Next day I wandered—an unhappy sprite—
Wondering the sun could shine and birds could sing!

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

Poor Bernardine !

BERNARDINE.

It was a year before I tried again ;
You know the rest.

ANSELMO.

Disciple ! comrade ! well I know the rest !
You made me glad when I was desolate,
Strong when my heart was weak. You gave me life.
I saw your genius rise and glow in you,
Like an enstrengthening sun. Poetry and art
Were all our life, and as we worked, we loved.
Now, like mosaic all our pictures are ;
Your hand is here, mine there, yet none can tell
Except ourselves, where you end—I begin,
The whole is rendered with such equal touch.
For in you Bernardine, though passing years
Have calmed my pulses, while your life-blood flows
In fullest current, I have found my mate.
But see ! the moon is up ; shall we go forth ?
You know our walk beneath the lichened trees.

BERNARDINE.

A cloud has hid the star—I hear the roll
Of distant thunder.

ANSELMO.

Nay, 'tis your fancy. Will you sing to me
Before we go ?

[Bernardine plays and sings.]

Anselmo and Bernardine.

SONG.

When the dawn shyly breaks,
Over the hill,
And night her mantle takes,
And all is still;
The day comes but to fade,
The night will soon return,
The sun is only made,
A little while to burn !

But when my love for thee
Dawned in my breast,
And in thy constancy,
I found my rest ;
Twas for eternal skies
The sun arose ;
The love-light in thine eyes
No sunset knows !

ANSELMO.

How well the music of your tender voice
Becomes the sweetness of these faithful words ;
And best of all I can believe them true.

(Exeunt.)

Anselmo and Bernardine.

SCENE II.—The Kitchen.

TERENCE. (*coming in hastily.*)

Sure all the winds have broken loose to-night,
Hark to the lashing storm ! the sky is black
Save when the lightning zig-zags thro' the dark
And, for a moment, blinds one.

ELLEN.

The thunder shakes the house ; there was a crash
An hour ago, as if a bolt had fallen.

TERENCE.

A bolt did fall. As I my horses groomed
I saw an ink-black cloud above the hill
Grow ever bigger ; then a dazzling light
Leapt from its bosom, and a crack, like doom
Half deafened me : the fountain on the lawn,
That played full height, sank to a dribbling stream
As if its source upon the distant hill
The fierce hot tongue of lightning had licked dry,
And, where the bolt fell, there a grave is dug.

ELLEN.

God save us !

TERENCE.

Just as the dread bolt fell—before the roll
Of the succeeding thunder died away—
Up rides a stranger, on a coal-black steed,
Dark as the cloud that overhung the hill ;
He looked so devilish I crossed myself.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

Black browed he was, black-haired, with eye so keen,
I dreaded he should turn it where I stood ;
Yet with a smile upon his face he rode,
Reining his fiery horse with such a hand
As one might use in sunny exercise,
Seeing me, he said, "good fellow, who lives here?"
"Anselmo, sir, the painter," I replied.
"Indeed! I'm in 'luck's way— I've heard of him ;
Here take my horse." With that my lord dismounts,
Stalks up the terrace flight and clangs the bell,
Just as the first big drops began to fall.

ELLEN.

I wonder who he is? Joan, the new maid,
Answered the bell, and said she liked him not.
He smiled at her and twirled his great moustache
And would have chucked her underneath the chin
But she drew back in dudgeon.

TERENCE.

I'll break his head!

ELLEN.

Oh, so you'll champion Joan? I thought her face
Had trapped you, Terence! Now, before she came
You thought me pretty—said you loved me well,
And, twice, you kissed me : vowed my eyes and shape
Were all you thought of. Oh, the men, the men !

TERENCE (*seizing her hands*).

You jealous Nell! To think that one light word
Just that 'I'd break his head,' should anger you,

Anselmo and Bernardine.

As if I'd courted Joan in earnest. Rather you
Should praise me as defending all your sex.

ELLEN.

O hang the sex! One woman for one man,
I say. Come, let me go, you jackanapes,
You Turk, hands off I say!

TERENCE.

Not till you've kissed me Nell. The brightest eyes
Are those that smile forgiveness on their love.
Should twenty new maids come, I'd love but you!
'Tis not alone I know you women want
All a man's heart; his body and his soul,
Till not the tiniest scrap of him shall stray
From its allegiance; but I also know
You are the one that's mistress of my heart,
And I shall know no change.

ELLEN.

Dear Terence!

Anselmo and Bernardine.

SCENE III.—The Drawing-room, Waynflete Hall.

THE DUKE OF MONTECHINO.

Who would have dreamt to find this home of art
Amid the wilds of Wales! My noblest room
But ill compares with this. Anselmo, here
Shows travelled lore, as well as learned ease
And ample wealth. That Roman vase is rare
This statue all the master's touch reveals.
Are these Anselmo's paintings? They are great
With noble character; strength and pure grace
The poetry and glory of the brush
Meet in each one. These solid Englishmen
Too often miss the noble sentiment
That should inform a room with harmony,
Their houses oft are rich, but out of tune;
But here's a man of most exacting taste.

Enter ANSELMO.

Your Grace is welcome! E'en the driving storm,
That made you seek the shelter of my roof,
Is admirable for this consequence.

DUKE.

I am indeed your debtor and the storm's.
Though I may say that your wild rocky coast
Has been unkind to me. Five years ago—
Not far from here I think—our ship was lost
And every soul on board except myself
Perished.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO (*Agitated*).

Say you so my Lord ?

DUKE.

That was a fearful night—a storm more dire
Than rages now without. And, worst of all
My niece, who was the apple of my eye
Was lost.

ANSELMO.

Dreadful ! That storm I vividly recall,
I heard, too, of the shipwreck.

DUKE.

Poor Bernardine ! She was a wayward girl ;
The course of years and travel may have dulled
The poignant edge of sorrow in my heart
But, in this place her memory revives.
She was artistic ; and this treasured room
Brings her before me.

ANSELMO.

How did your Grace escape on that fell night ?

DUKE.

Just as the wave that swept me overboard
Broke on the ship, I gripped a spar that lay
Upon the deck, and held on like grim death.
Nature's first law is that we save ourselves
You know. Thus driven, helpless, out to sea,
I kept afloat, and, by a lucky chance
Was picked up by a passing ship ; to read
At the first port we touched, that all on board
Were lost.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

A fearful fate! And your poor Bernardine?

DUKE.

Her lover, even now, is scarce consoled.

ANSELMO.

She was betrothed?

DUKE.

I meant her for a worthy friend of mine,
Who paid her most devoted court;
The matter would have ripened in a month.
Her maiden coyness melted like the snow;
I saw it. Yet she kept him off and on
As girls will: saying neither yea nor nay.
But that is over now. Why bring the past
From its deep-covered grave? Of other things
And pleasanter we'll talk. Your pictures here;
These are your work?

ANSELMO.

They are your Grace—such as they are they're mine.

DUKE.

I, who am called a judge, pronounce them fine.
But that my purse has grown attenuate
These latter days, I'd buy a few of them
And hang them on my walls.

ANSELMO.

I do not sell, my lord. That day has past,
When I too felt the pangs of hope deferred,

Anselmo and Bernardine.

And worked as many a painter does: his heart
Dull with despair, hunger, and poverty;
When, asking for his bread, he gets the stone
The critics give him. Thank God that is past.

DUKE.

Then as a suppliant I must come, and beg
A sketch or two—I pray you thwart me not;
I trow that in this full portfolio here
There's many a bright presentment of your art.
More oft the hasty sketch sets forth the soul
Of your true artist than his finished work;
For painters are inspired as poets are,
And thoughts are transient as the diamond dew
The thieving sun steals from the lavish earth;
So, through the first, few, rapid, hasty lines—
In which a painter wraps his fresh idea—
Pure beauty shines; as shows some goddess' form—
Carved by a Grecian sculptor—through her robe.

ANSELMO.

Your words betray a knowledge most profound;
I fear my sketches will but poorly please
So keen a judge; pray you be lenient!

(Opens portfolio.)

DUKE.

That face! my niece! where did you get that face?
'Tis she herself—and here she is again!

ANSELMO.

A fancy portrait, Duke—is that your Bernardine?
Then her true spirit must have wandered here;

Anselmo and Bernardine.

The painter's soul oft mirrors heaven and earth,
And who shall tell what spirit-faces pass
And fill his mind with beauty? Like you this?
It is a landscape some few miles from here :
Or this of peasants perhaps may please your eye?

DUKE.

I'll hold to this—'tis wonderful—herself !
So that you give me this I'll go, content ;
Give me the two—you have the face in mind,
You soon can sketch another.

ANSELMO.

Just as you will—but fain I'd give you this ;
I value those two faces.

DUKE.

I too, my good Anselmo. Grant this boon
And I am truly grateful. Have I won?

ANSELMO.

Be it so my lord.
[*Aside.*] Would he were gone ! I fear he will request
The fair original when next he speaks.
There is insistent mastery in his tones.

DUKE.

I thank you heartily. The storm has passed,
And see, the moonlight lies o'er vale and hill ;
By your good leave I'll take the road again,
I sleep to-night at Cardigan.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

My groom shall bring your horse.

DUKE.

Farewell, Anselmo; I shall speak your name
With reverence in Italy, where art
Has her true home. Here she is exiled. No?
I see your eyebrows lift. Well—have your way,
I know that Englishmen are masterful;
So were we once—so some of us are still.

[Exit Duke.]

ANSELMO.

Now might he sink into the very earth
Now might the lightning strike him, or the flood
Suck him to whelming death—so nevermore
He came across me! What a fool was I—
A coward fool—a coward, cringing fool,
That to his face I did not boldly say;
“Your Bernardine is here, and here shall stay
“For all your mouthing tyranny of words—
“I’ll hold her with my life.” How easy seems
The path of valour when the chance is gone:
The strongest words are those we might have used;
The brightest deeds are those we might have done;
But Opportunity comes round but once,
And leaves the heart irresolute to chafe
At its own weakness. So the end is this—
That murder’s in my mind; O dastard soul—
That could not speak—but now would strike him dead!

Anselmo and Bernardine.

Enter BERNARDINE.

Anselmo! what is wrong; your face is sad
Why pace you thus distraught? Tell me my love
Who was your visitor?

ANSELMO.

A wandering knave, and I'm a coward fool!

BERNARDINE.

Nay, do not give me riddles. Am I not
Your own, your true companion? I but want
To cheer you if I may: I do not pry.

ANSELMO.

Forgive me Bernardine my petulance,
Doubt not my love. I long to haste the day
Of our forthcoming nuptials, when in church
We hear the sacred words that make us one;
Till then time moves too slowly: and, besides
"There's many a slip," the proverb says, "between
The cup and lip." Till thus you're really mine
The shadow of some dark impending fate
Seems sometimes o'er my path.

BERNARDINE.

How well I knew the shadow, years ago!
The shadow of a suitor that I loathed,
But yet my guardian ever forced on me—
Urging his rank and riches, till my soul
Rebelled in hate.

[*Enter Terence, hastily.*]

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

Why Terence ! what's the matter ? You are pale
And out of breath.

TERENCE.

Bad news sir—dreadful news ! The gentleman
Who left your door but now, is drowned and dead.

ANSELMO.

Drowned and dead ! My God !
Then is the guilt of murder on my soul
I wished him dead and now he's dead indeed.

BERNARDINE.

What means this fearful thing—these frenzied words ?

TERENCE.

Mounting his horse, he took the bridle path
That leads beside the river, where the cliff
Rises straight up on one side, and, below
The bank falls to the torrent, that to-night—
Swelled by the rains—sweeps down an angry flood ;
Scarce twenty yards he rode, when from the cliff
A mass of rock and soil, storm-loosened, fell.
The ground gaped wide beneath him ; horse and man
Went down together and were swallowed up
In the wild roaring river.

ANSELMO.

A fearful end ! Could you do nothing, Terence ?

Anselmo and Bernardine.

TERENCE.

Nothing ; the path is blocked, there's no way down,
The torrent madly sweeps right out to sea.

BERNARDINE.

Be not so deep distressed Anselmo. All
That could be done was done. This sudden end
That seems so dread might yet be painless too.
I for his soul will pray, and tell my beads
The whole night long, although I know him not,
For death, like birth, makes all mankind akin.

[*Exit Bernardine.*]

ANSELMO.

Go light my studio lamps Terence.

[*Exit Terence.*]

Now I'm alone, with murder on my soul.
I wished him dead ; the Devil heard my prayer.

SCENE IV.—*Anselmo's Studio.*

ANSELMO.

This is the second night, and sleepless still
I wait the weary dawn that even now
Begins once more to turn the black to gray,
But leaves my conscience dark as Egypt's night.

[*Goes to the window.*]

How often I have watched with joy the dawn
Break over nature. Slow at first the light

Anselmo and Bernardine.

Reveals each hill and tree: the shadows lurk
In this retreat and that, but hide in vain
From all-pervading day that each recess
Searches and penetrates. So comes the dawn
Of the Eternal Day when not a thought
Or deed of darkness shall evade the eye
Of God Almighty. Call it what we will:
Mere superstition, or a mind o'erwrought,
It pricks us still; and in the hours of night
Makes thorny softest pillow. Who are those
Who prate that hell is not? Our memories
Are hell enough; and in the hush of night
They preach of long, eternal agony.

[Enter Bernardine, with a lamp:]

BERNARDINE.

Will you not, dearest, let me share your grief?
What is it troubles you? Have I not tried
To be your faithful love? But love is naught
That is not strong enough to bear a load—
That does not long to bear it. Load me down
With your most weighty burdens. Let me feel
Their pressure and their spite. Be cross with me
And tell me I am but a fool; but hide
From me no trifle of what troubles you.
Think you that I could sleep when you did not?
Or this poor lamp go out while yours was lit?
These two nights I have watched and prayed for you.
Do you not know that I would die for you—
That if you were condemned to lowest hell
I would go there with you and think it heaven?

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

My dearest angel! I believe in heaven
When you are here. And I will hide no more
My darkling secret. Know then, Bernardine,
The guest that perished in that angry flood
Was your own uncle.

BERNARDINE.

My uncle? Dear Anselmo, but he died
At sea, five years ago.

ANSELMO.

The duke of Montechino was not dead;
He was picked up at sea. And here he came;
And, when he went, I prayed that he might die
So now it seems that I have murdered him.

BERNARDINE.

Oh, cruel fate! But, dearest, I am yours,
What if you wished him dead? I know that you—
Who would not hurt a fly—are not to blame.

ANSELMO.

You are too kind, my love; why, if we stood
Now at the altar, I should see his face,
And hear his voice forbidding us.

[*Knocking without.*]

VOICES.

Anselmo! Anselmo! Open the door!

Anseldo and Bernardine.

(Enter villagers escorting the Duke of Montechino, attired in fisherman's clothes.)

DUKE.

How now, Anseldo ! Here I come again ;
I am the man your Shakespeare wrote about
No "drowning mark" on me !

ANSELMO.

My God ! 'Tis he ! I thank Thee, Lord of Life !
[Embraces him.]

Duke, you are welcome as the crystal draught
To him who faints with thirst : as is reprieve
To him who on the scaffold waits his end.

DUKE.

Thus twice the sea that rages round your coast
Has spewed me forth. Whether I am indeed
Too sickly sweet a morsel for its taste
I know not—perhaps too bitter. This I know,
These clothes smell monstrous fishy. I might be
The prophet Jonah—recent from his whale !

ANSELMO.

Tell me how you escaped.

DUKE.

The story grows monotonous. A boat
Starting with others for the fishing grounds
Hauled off its course and cast a hook for me ;
Then in a smoky cabin the rough crew
Poured burning spirits down my gasping throat,
And rubbed me into life again.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

Thank God ! Thank God ! How sweet the daylight is !
Come in, my lord ; I've something great to say,
And you, my friends, come in.

DUKE. .

Bernardine !

ANSELMO.

[*Taking Bernardine's hand.*]

'Tis she, my lord ; and she and I are one ;
To-morrow morn our wedding bells shall ring.
You have been rescued from the wildering deep
That you might give your blessing on the day,
For nothing now shall part my love from me.

DUKE.

I see you tricked me, friend ; but be it so,
I war no more with Fate. My Bernardine,
Let me embrace you. I will wish you joy,
For there's a power that guards a loving maid,
That's past our reckoning.

Anselmo and Bernardine.

SCENE V. The Sea Shore. Anselmo, Bernardine and the Duke. A yacht in the distance.

DUKE.

Thus ends a week of wonders. Yonder sails
The man I thought would wed you Bernardine,
For he and I are sailing round the world.
It was arranged that he should seek me here
When I had ceased my lonely pilgrimage
Among these hills and vales. I little thought
That I should see once more my Bernardine,
Little he dreams that you he wooed are here ;
But now you are Anselmo's lawful wife,
And he will bear not you but me away.

ANSELMO.

See ! The boat puts off for you.

DUKE.

They saw our signal. Think of me, you two
As kindly as you can—as one who thinks
Of you most kindly. I have learned that fate
Exceeds our strength in matters of the heart,
And you are guarded by some greater Power
Than reason wots of. Fast the boat comes on,
And soon will ground upon the pebbly strand ;
Farewell, Anselmo ! Farewell, Bernardine !

[They embrace ; the Duke embarks and is rowed away.]

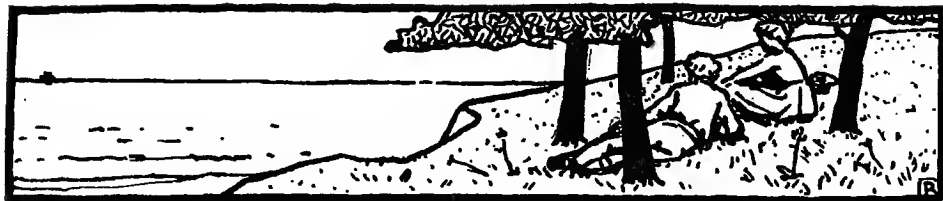
Anselmo and Bernardine.

ANSELMO.

How sweet the sunshine lies on sea and land,
The green translucent waves laugh in their glee,
The birds sing sweetest notes from bough to bough,
And from the sky a kindly blessing drops
On every thankful heart! The bounteous sea,
That gave you to me, Bernardine,
Speaks with a thousand voices on this day,
And promises delightful joys to come;
No more its voice is sad and desolate,
But evermore in tones of joy shall sing!

BERNARDINE.

And it shall be the image of my love—
So wide, so deep, so joyous and profound!



Elegy on the Death of Sir John A. Macdonald.

As each day came and went the light,
Our hopes grew slighter and more slight;
Then bells tolled tidings thro' the night:

“Sir John is dead.”

Rest after strain; peace after fight;
Sir John is dead.

To-day the news flies far away,
“He's dead,” the whispering people say;
How can the sunshine be so gay,

While dead he lies?

Half-mast the flag; cloud garish day,
For dead he lies.

So jauntily he held his own,
His will had such determined throne,
By death for him to be o'erthrown
Seems against nature.

Could not Death take some miser lone?
Some stony creature?

Are there no sad, lugubrious folk,
Who weary of their mortal yoke?
He never did: him fate ne'er broke;
To man or woman,
Always with friendly smile he spoke,
He was so human!

Death of Sir John A. Macdonald.

Alas! the tiresome dullards live,
And long discourses grimly give,
To which one's mind becomes a sieve;
 But his words brightened
Nights dark and argumentative,
 As if it lightened!

This praise be his by tongue and pen,
That well he read his fellow-men,
He knew just how to strike, and when,
 He knew our nature;
The rich, the poor, were in his ken,
 Their every feature.

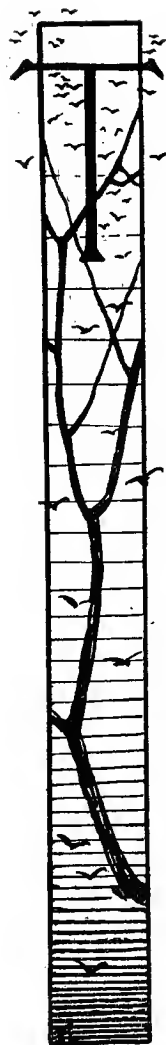
His daring railroad, eager, great,
Spanned rock and plain inanimate,
But living hearts throughout the State
 Were his by capture,
And every thronged electorate
 Heard him with rapture.

Play o'er him no funereal airs!
No "Dead March" blare when forth he fares,
These may be saved: let them be theirs
 He leaves behind him.
He lives: and when end all our cares,
 Please God, we'll find him.



Leslie

January 10th-13th 1887.



HE chilly dawn shows through the frosted pane
And wakes me from an all-night troubled dream;
The church-tower scarcely looms through densest mist,
The trees are beauteous with snow tracery,
As if decked out for some festivity.
Alas that such a day should dawn on me,
It is the day of Leslie's funeral!
My poor sweet-heart who bore this blossom bright,
Wake thou not yet, and may thy dreams be sweet;
Wake thou not yet! perchance his little hand,
Free now from earth's encumbering cerements,
Touches thy brain with some sweet fantasy,
And takes thee to a land where all is bright,
And where no mist, or cold, or death, hath sway.
Wake thou not yet! nor think it is the morn,
When from our sight must sink his beauteous form
Into that open grave amidst the snow;
Wake thou not yet!

So now in this gray silence of the dawn,
Let me set down the thoughts that in me rise,
And tender memories of our dear one's life,
That flock like little birds around my head,
Light on my couch and trill their elegies.

Leslie.

O blue-eyed darling of the sunny hair,
Gone from our arms, our hearts, our board, our home,
How shall I paint thee for a stranger's eye?
Too great the task! but yet I may inscribe
Some glimpse of thee upon a lasting page,
Which, to a friendly soul, shall call thee back
When years have dulled and blurred thy memory.
Yet no mere inventory would I spin,
Of items coldly drawn to tedious length;
Aid me O Lord! my eyes are dim with tears.

I think I see him standing at my knee,
His soft, warm pressure thrilling to my heart,
As looking eagerly into my face
He told "a story," for of such conceits
His four years' memory held a wondrous store;
Of lions, tigers, beasts in antres vast,
That made you hold your breath to hear of them;
And always came some grand heroic "man"
Armed with death-dealing gun, or mighty sword;
And as he told of him, the little bard,
So earnest, he came near to frowning as he gazed,
Looked with intensest force into your eyes,
To see that you were properly impressed;
Yet all the while there was a glance that shewed
He knew 'twas make-up. Or, methinks I see
His little form prepared for daily school;
Quaint little legs, and tiny feet that seemed
Too small to tread the world's rough, jostling ways,
Peeped out beneath his childish garb of brown;
Upon his head a boatman's knitted cap,

Leslie.

And round his throat a loosely knit blue shawl
That wondrously showed off his yellow hair ;
Norse-king he seemed in little, fierce and brave,
As ever Norse-king was that ever lived ;
A bold, big heart beat in that little form,
That went right on and counted not the cost.
His make was stout and plump, his face was cherub-like,
Nor shrank he to attack when season came,
A foeman seven times o'er his height and size,
For he was brave, determined, of one mind,
And knew his mind, and carried out his thought.
How deft his fingers were ! how quick to move ;
Sweet little soft white hands with backs full plump,
And tapering fingers—just the hand for skill ;
And just as quick and clever was his brain.
He chose his words, and though his “ R's ” were “ L's ”,
His talking was precise and clear as mine,
So many words he knew dear prattling soul !

Sometimes on Sunday eve with brothers three,
He'd say, “ Now father, have a sermon, do.”
“ Sermon ” he called it, and so down they sat
And fixed on me their keen, enquiring gaze ;
Sure never preacher had directer “ call ; ”
And in some simple words I'd tell again,
Stories that through the ages hush the world,
Of Jesus, David, Joseph, Abraham ;
The story of the errant prodigal ;
Or him that through the desert sought his sheep.
Ah ! how his dear face showed a soul attent,
A heart that felt each turn the story took

Leslie.

As if 'twere now and not in times of eld !
And when the " questions " came, for much they loved
To show to me how much they treasured up,
His was the hand most eagerly thrust out
In true school-fashion, his the answering tongue
That most surprised me with its keen comments.
But now for thee my stories are no more
Dear heart, thou'rt gathered to the saints of old.

How shall we ever think of Christmas Day
And not remember Leslie, darling of our hearts ?
His vigour, brilliance, skill to entertain ?
His little recitation " Naughty Hugh,"
Given with some touches of the actor's art,
Lives with us still—we scarce can think him dead—
Nor yet can feel that he who charmed us then
Is quite beyond our reach.

Alas ! too soon the star of Christmas set,
Alas ! too soon the star of home's withdrawn ;
Our eyes with agonizing tears are wet ;
And sadly o'er the landscape creeps the dawn ;
Farewell, sweet laddie, always blithe and gay,
For we to thy dear grave must take our way.





The End of the Day

The day is done : with weary feet
I tread the way that leads me home ;
The bells the curfew hour repeat,
Across the vale from tower and dome.

Unspoken yearning fills my heart,
Nor thought can reach, nor fancy tell,
Nor memory heal the aching smart,
I've learnt, of late, to know so well.

How fared it with our child to-day ?
Who at our board we do not see ;
The voyager who went away
Alone, across the shadowy sea.

What brought the hours for him I love ?
What angel-tasks of work or play ?
What tender touch in heaven above
Guided him through this life-long day ?

Did sunrise flood his path with light ?
To some sweet school he went I wist,
With heaven's glory all bedight,
And gates of pearl and amethyst.

The End of the Day.

When out he came with troops of friends,
So brightly pure, so gladly gay,
Did one thought such as memory sends
Come fluttering down this earthward way ?

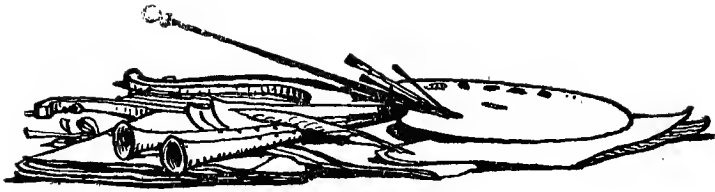
To touch me with its rose-leaf touch,
And thrill me with mysterious joy ?
Did he, of whom we think so much,
Remember he's his father's boy ?

Thought he of us : turned he this way ?
Was there one step of memory born,
As if he'd make for home and say
All he had done at school that morn ?

No answer comes : there's none to tell,
My heart can only sob and wail,
And listen to the curfew bell,
That tolls the hour across the vale.

Come soothing sleep ; come holy night ;
In visions I may see once more
The little presence, angel-bright,
That went for aye from out our door !

And who can tell—ah, who can tell,
Or fathom heaven's deep mystery ?
Perhaps in some ambrosial dell
In cherub sleep he'll dream of me !



Deaf and Blind

I heard musicians play ;
And harp and viol, cornet and bassoon,
And deep sweet strings gave forth their harmony,
 Trying their best to say
All that the Master wrote : yet when the croon
Of the last wailing chord had slowly stopt,
The players—all unfeeling—spoke of beer,
 And, with a ghastly leer,
Retailed the latest scandal : music dropt.

Whereat I marvelled sore,
For heaven seemed opened by their minstrelsy ;
Strange that they entered not ! and were content
 With opening thus its door,
Leaving it wide for others and for me :
“ It is their way,” said Hans, my artist friend,
And to his studio eager led the way,
 Where, on his easel, lay
His latest landscape ; ah ! you know the end ?

Deaf and Blind.

For while, with entranced eye,
I saw his work transfigured ; reacht at once
A meaning that he never knew at all—
Hans spoke of technique dry,
And as to Nature seemed a hopeless dunce ;
Described his work with details not a few,
As though the scene it pictured was mere naught,
A mere effect, just caught
To show his skill on—anything would do.

And so I marvelled more ;
Yet thought “ perhaps this is the way of things
In this strange-ordered earth. The player knows
Little beyond his score,
Nor hears the harmonies he sweetly rings
Through others' being : while the painter's eye
Is blind to beauty e'en a scribe may see ” ;
And so the poet—he
Not for himself writes songs that do not die.





Kinship and Friendship

The crowd that pass thee by,
With their myriad heads and faces,
With their smile, frown, or sigh,
Garb of rags, cloth, silk or laces—
They thy kinsfolk—brothers
Are ; there are no others.

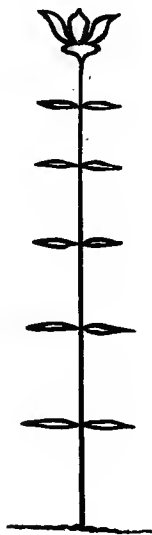
Black, or white, or yellow ;
Talking smoothly, or blaspheming,
Each of them thy fellow
Is, although diverse their seeming ;
Not shape nor hue, but soul,
Shows thee their farthest goal.

Yea, if in battle grim,
Ye should meet in combat deadly ;
Fight, till the sun's last rim
Sank through lurid war-smoke redly ;
Thou shouldst know them, thy kin,
In struggle and in sin.

Kinship and Friendship.

Or, if in heavenly dream,
Ye did meet in fields immortal ;
 Guided by some faint gleam
From the angels' opened portal ;
 Thou wouldst know them thy kin,
Who safe had entered in.

And yet, despite all this,
It is but seldom—here and there—
 That the soul's sweetest kiss
Is given ; for Friendship's blossom rare,
 Now here, now there is seen ;
But deserts lie between !





To H.H.W.

RIFTING like leaves
Blown by the weather ;
O'er fields and sheaves,
We came together.

Wind ! blow no more awhile, here let us linger ;
Fate ! drive us not apart ; stay thy dread finger.

Memories of colour
Live in us yet ;
And visions of dolour
We cannot forget ;
In the sweet sunshine, here let us stay awhile ;
Thy soft hand, O Peace, on us but lay awhile !

When in the Book of Fate
We are collected,
(Far be the day, and late)
To be inspected ;
May you and I, my friend, not thus for ages,
Occupy, (dried and prest), different pages !



If I Were Asked to Say

If I were asked to say,
The cruelest thing that had come my way;
No lion or wolf would be my choice,
 But with indignant voice,
I would say t'was a woman's scathing tongue,
 Oftenest the heart of man has wrung.

If I were asked to name
The hardest thing in Nature's frame,
I'd never so much as think of stone,
 Diamonds I'd leave alone ;
There's a harder thing I sometimes feel—
 For a woman's heart may be harder than steel.

Yet were I asked to choose
The sweetest thing that the whole earth views,
No flower or bird however rare,
 Nor loveliest landscape fair,
No music's thrill, nor coo of dove,
 Should vie with a woman's tender love !



Hope

Gray dawn compares but ill with perfect day ;
The bud foretells but little of the flower ;
Who from the nest could write the lark's bright lay,
Would overreach the bounds of human power.

Who on the mountain weeps the valley past ?
Who in his prime regrets the days of birth ?
Who wants his present state for aye to last ?
Who, heaven in sight, would backward turn to earth ?

Onward ! for ever on ! is nature's cry ;
From low to high, from high to higher we move,
And, though o'er vanished joys sometimes we sigh,
It is the future that we long to prove.

Mourn not the backward past, but onward look—
Beyond the horizon's verge perfection gleams ;
And, from the leaves of God's unopened book,
A hidden glory, ever brightening streams.

To some who wrote Verses on Tennyson's Death

Good gentlemen ; for his sake spare your songs ;
Give us no more these lame and halting lines ;
Raise not your tuneless voices in the night,
But let the dogs do that who bay the moon.
For though He, moonlike, soars in the sweet heaven,
We, who so loved him, still are here on earth.

I pray ye cease as ye are gentlemen,
Be not the sleepy flies of this sad fall,
Who—tumbling in the ink pot—drag their legs
Inconsequent across a virgin page ;
Leave the page virgin if your hearts are good !
And, if ye loved him—as ye say ye did—
Vex not his ghost with your unmeasured rhymes,
For, though he died, his friends still live on earth.





Two Visitors

(Supposed to be narrated by a Canadian farmer.)

I.

To visit me was his own plan,
He was a rich and travelled man,
I but a plain Canadian.

He wondered how I could live here,
He looked about with eyes severe,
And thought my neighbors "very queer."

My house was built "wrong way about,"
He said: "had I not found it out?"
Whereat my wife began to pout.

We gave him of our very best,
Our kitchen gave my wife no rest;
He ate, but without any zest.

Some pictures decorate our home;
He told us we should see the dome
Painted by Angelo, at Rome.

He bore our ways quite patiently,
But did not fail to make us see
That he was more refined than we.

Two Visitors.

To church he went with us one day,
We heard our parson preach and pray ;
He said that darkness on him lay.

Our landscapes he scarce cared to view,
Their beauties really were so few,
Mere forest scenes were nothing new.

Over the atlas one wet day,
He said, if he could have his say,
He'd plan the world another way.

At last, he grew so bored, he went ;
Having, by fate malevolent,
Sowed many seeds of discontent.

And as I think of him I say :
" Good riddance," and, " alack the day
When he first turned his steps this way."

II.

There came another to my cot,
I scarce can tell how there he got ;
He many blessings brought, I wot.

The sun shone out the day he came,
Said he : " We've nothing quite the same,"
And praised the sunset's " dying flame."

" How fresh and new your life," he said,
" Already my bewildered head
" Grows clearer ; hope is never dead."

Two Visitors.

He praised my horses and my cows,
And asked me, while he watched them browse,
Of how we sow, and reap, and house.

"Your father was a pioneer,
This house he built, how very dear,"
He said, "must be this roof-tree queer."

An artist he, and finely strung;
One day, when shadowed sunshine flung
Its charm, he painted it, and hung

The finished picture on the wall;
We crowded round, and on us all
Our other pictures seemed to pall.

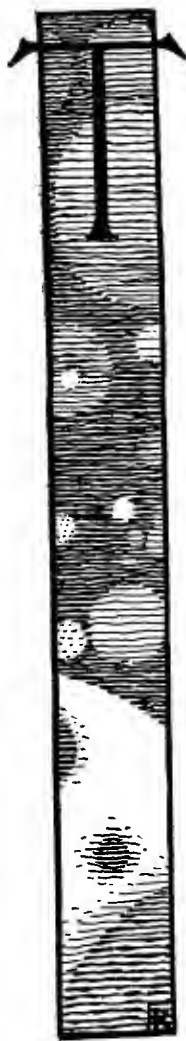
He brought us books, and as he read,
There seemed a halo round his head;
"How beautiful!" we gently said.

He taught us that through valiant strife,
A busy man and busier wife,
Might reach at last a nobler life.

When the day came for him to go,
Our eyes were wet, our hearts were low,
We hated him to leave us so.

And now we say: "Oh, friend, come back!"
His words we keep, his ways we track,
And with fresh zeal our tasks attack.

Materials



THE tree that on the hillside stood,
Bore the wild stress of many a storm ;
Yet year by year its precious wood
Grew into perfect grain and form,
Till from its heart the craftsman made
The harp on which a master played.

Through aeons of gloom and earthquake shock,
In dark recesses of the earth,
Where chaos shook the solid rock,
The pure white marble had its birth ;
And now behold the statue stand
In beauty from the sculptor's hand.

The rough brown ore the miner cast
Into the glowing furnace fire—
Urged by the engine's roaring blast—
In such fierce burning might expire ;
Yet from that matrix came the blade
By which a continent was swayed.

And so beneath the various fate
That mouldeth all of human lot :
All that we are—of small or great—
Is fashioned, though we know it not ;
And secrets that the ages keep
Are plain in nature's wider sweep.



Saviours—(A Dream)

Long time he talked, and I sat listening,
Yet scarcely comprehending all he said ;
His eloquence, like water from the roof,
When summer showers make a mimic flood
Brim all the eavestroughs, flowed a constant stream.
I was the little child who holds beneath
His tiny bottle, that the stream flows o'er
But never fills. He talked of history,
Of how to right all wrongs, of plans whereby
The rich should help the poor ; the poor, the rich,
The strife of Capital and Labour end,
And Poverty be but a long-past dream.
And, as he talked, there came a woman gray,
Gathering around her frame, with her left hand
A mantle worn and thin, while with her right
She ever pointed straight at him who talked.
And pointing thus, with trembling lips she said :

“ The way is rough and my feet are sore ;
Yet saviours many I have known,
They help me now as they helped before
Yet never a one with a heart of stone.”

Saviours (A Dream).

Scarce interrupting his perpetual flow,
The talker slightly changed his attitude,
As who should say : " This woman's naught to me,
But yet I will not wither her with scorn " ;
(But scorn was in his heart) and so began
To launch into the sea of politics,
Whereof he thought himself a wondrous seer.
He spoke of laws, and how the laws should change
As changed the people's needs : then he went on
To outline policies and tell their scope :
Full well he grasped our needs, and shewed he knew
Each detail of our multifarious life.
But she who spoke before, now spoke again,
Crouching the while and pointing, pointing still,
And here are just the words she trembling spoke :

" The way is rough and my life is long,
The days are dark and the years forlorn :
Many a saviour I've known and strong,
But never a one with a lip of scorn."

Pausing a moment in his facile speech,
The talker turned an angry eye on her
Who thus had dared to show her discontent ;
But he too lofty was to be perturbed,
To outward sight, and so we left him there,
Still vigorously talking. When I looked,
For her who spoke so strangely, she was gone,
But a weird voice spoke thus, close to my ear :

Saviours (A Dream).

“ The way is rough and the sky is drear,
The sun goes down in lurid red,
And visions full of a gruesome fear,
Come sweeping about my aching head :
Yet I think of the saints of days gone by,
Who helped the world right willingly,
Women, who meekly gave their life,
And wrought for peace, in the midst of strife :
I think of the blood that the martyrs shed,
But never a one had an eye of lead.”

Just then, I woke, and found it all a dream ;
The dream had method, so I set it down.



William J. O'Connor

(Champion Oarsman 1888)

Who died Nov. 25th, 1892.

Snow veils the new made grave like tears that are frozen ;
Wild winds take up our sighs and interpret their sadness ;
Blowing down then o'er the lake and its wide lonely
spaces,

No more to feel his oar : the oar of O'Connor !
Moan in your loneliness ; lonely and level lake spaces
No more to feel, even once, the oar of O'Connor !

Four years ago he was feted and well he deserved it ;
Four years ago he was champion : torch-light processions
Shed on his path their light. What need, when his glory
Beamed on it too ? In stress and in struggle he'd
conquered :

Then there were speeches and cheers : warm words from
the Mayor ;

He, ever modest, stood manly and calm, self-reliant ;
Verging no inch toward conceit, brave William O'Connor !

Sigh o'er our lake still sadly, O winds of Ontario !
Sigh o'er our lake's lonely spaces with sighs that are
better than speech ;

Come then landward again, and there in the graveyard,
Tell forth our grief o'er the grave of William O'Connor !





For a Christening

For thee, sweet child, above the eastern hills,
The glowing dawn of hopeful day arises ;
But see ! where splendour the horizon fills,
A gleaming cross the watcher's eye surprises ;
O Cross, that once showed black against the sky,
How turns thy dark to light that shines on high !

On thy dear home it casts its lightsome ray,
That once a Mother's breast filled full with sorrow,
But now—on this thy bright baptismal day—
From it thy mother's heart sweet joy may borrow ;
As on thy brow is made the mystic sign,
And parents twain thee to their God resign.

And if, somewhere upon the distant road,
There lie for thee Gethsemanes of sadness—
No human path but there some tears have flowed—
May angels' consolations bring thee gladness ;
May, o'er thy path, still gleam the Cross of Light,
And make rough places plain before thy sight !



Bells of St. Ives

Bells of St. Ives ; bells of St. Ives,
I list for your clangour across the broad ocean :
You stir all the air with a tremulous motion.

Bells of St. Ives—joining two lives,
What does your clangour say, what is your message ?
Say what past years you recall ; say what you presage.

Bells of St. Ives ; bells of St. Ives,
Across the broad ocean I scarcely can hear you,
But some notes I catch that you sing, never fear you.

Bells of St. Ives ; bells of St. Ives,
I hear that to-day you are joyfully ringing,
I feel in my heart all your jubilant swinging.

Bells of St. Ives ; bells of St. Ives,
I see, as you ring of the building of bowers,
A grave in the West ; newly-covered with flowers.



At a Lecture on Lunacy

I am a man, nay, a king, though I sometimes feel weak
as a child !

And sometimes, God help me !—so strong that they call
me violent and wild—

Me, though a child might control me, and draw me with
one single hair—

Me, though I worshipped my mother, and never gave
father a care.

I know that was long years ago—before I was crowned
as a king :

Where is my crown ? I forget where I left it, and gold
that I fling

Into the street to my subjects—how greedy they are for
my gold !

And they come for it, beg for it, grovelling, with pleadings
manifold.

Ah, where did I leave that gold ? for that, after all, is my
power ;

At a Lecture on Lunacy.

Is it gone? Then, good bye to my throne, it will not last
an hour.

But no—it is here—great bags of it—tons of it, heavily
piled;

Thank God! I breathe freely once more, once more I
am reconciled.

Pent up, though I am, in this palace; but kings have, I
know, had their woes;

One day I'll be free as the wind that away on the hillside
blows!

These doors and these strongly-barred windows are part
of a game of play;

These are not real; 'tis a dream, and of course it will
soon pass away;

The Asylum they call this place, and they feign we are
all of us mad;

We, who are sane and so cool—you find thousands out-
side quite as bad.

Yet here in the session, by scores, come the diligent
students of law,

To be taught how we madmen look—how, like ravens,
we jabber and claw;

And they bring me out on the platform to tell of my
throne and my crown;

While I speak they are laughing aloud, they care not a
fig for my frown;

And I think sometimes—for a moment—that if but my
swordsmen were here,

The laugh would die out in pallor, for the room in a
trice I would clear—

At a Lecture on Lunacy.

Lecturer, students, and all the crowd I would drive in a
frightened rout ;

Jupiter ! how they would turn and run when they once
heard my soldiers shout !

And I'd do it, by heaven, I'd do it, for I hold it far from
right

That I should be made a show of—laughed at. But
what is this new, strange light ?

Is this the bewildered end of the life that so strangely
ebbs and flows ?

I can see it now: I've been mad ; but now comes the
end of the strife,

Will the sawbones mock me in death as these scriv'ners
have mocked me in life ?





To C. and M.

Along life's road as forth you go,
Hand in hand together,
Through sun or shade, blow high or low,
Breeze or stormy weather ;
Be yours to hear—now high and clear—
Now whispered soft and slowly—
Through summer's prime, in winter drear,
These accents pure and holy :
“ True love can never die ; you may sigh, men may lie,
But love can never die.”

The winds that whistle round your cot,
Waves that moan around you,
The birds that sing they know not what,
Music that may surround you ;
The organ's roll, the bell's deep toll,
Within the belfry swinging,
They all shall sound within your soul,
This cheerful legend singing :
“ True love can never die ; fate may try, riches fly,
But love can never die.”

To C. and M.

So, on this day of fateful troth,
Clasp hands firm together,
Let purpose high bestead you both,
Hope's wing lose no feather ;
Across the sea your kin are we,
And we this message send you—
Although, alas ! we cannot see
The solemn rites that blend you :
“ True love can never die ; streams may dry, youth may
fly,
But love can never die.”



A Song of Life.



BABY boy stood by his mother's knee,
And to walk he timidly tried ;
But the floor seemed to rock like a ship at sea ;
" Be careful ! " his mother she cried.
But " I'll try it for myself," thought the baby boy,
" I'll try it for myself," thought he.

A young man sighed for a fair young girl ;
And an angel she seemed to be.
" Beware," said his mother, " of passion's deep whirl,
Or grieving 'twill bring to thee ! "
But " I'll try it for myself," thought the gay young man ;
" I'll try it for myself," thought he.

An old man had come to the end of his life,
He scarcely could hear or see.
" Have faith," said the priest, " peace will come after
strife,
And the shadows away will flee ! "
" I must try it for myself," thought the old, old man,
" I must try it for myself," thought he.

Farewell to Summer.



WEEP ! weep ! oh, tearful skies,
While summer gently dies,
And let us bid her sad farewell ;
There are no tears so dear
As yours, nor so sincere,
Nor to our hearts such solace tell.
Farewell !

The trees with beauteous green
The leaves no longer screen,
But to the sun their verdure sell ;
He gives then glittering gold,
And colors manifold,
How short their day 'twere vain to tell.
Farewell !

Let the wind sadly sigh
O'er flowers that withered lie,
In sober mead, or verdant dell ;
Under the falling leaves,
The shroud that autumn weaves,
They sleep, that once we loved so well.
Farewell !

Farewell to Summer.

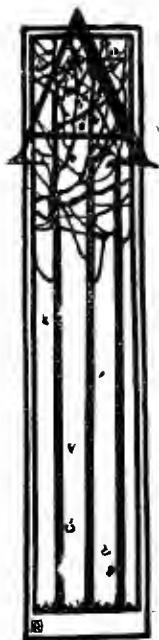
Not with rare flow'rets gay
Make we a last bouquet,
 But mint, and rue, and asphodel ;
These are our chosen flowers,
Now that the summer hours
 No more our hearts with gladness swell.
 Farewell !

Early the waning light
Fades from our pensive sight,
 While deeply tolls the evening bell ;
Over the tree-tops tall,
Night treads her airy hall,
 And silent listens to the knell.
 Farewell !

By the night coldly kissed,
The silvery ghostly mist
 Wakes from its slumbrous earthy cell ;
Wanders beneath the trees,
Moved by each passing breeze,
 Where late the burning sunshine fell.
 Farewell !

Beneath the stars' faint gleam
Moves on the placid stream,
 And towards the sea doth flow and swell ;
So doth our life-stream flee
On towards infinity,
 Where no abiding sorrows dwell.
 Farewell !

Alas! Alas! For Mortal Change



LAS! alas! for mortal change,
There is no light but dies in shade;
The richest splendours are but made
By suns that sink beyond our range.
And discord ends the sweetest song,
And saddening silence reigns, where late
The woodbird to his loving mate
Sang, blithely-brisk the whole day long.
The sweetest breath of sweetest flowers,
Passes on Autumn winds away,
And only withered leaves will stay
To speak with us of summer bowers.
And Friendship, will it fade with years?
And Love be changed to cold esteem?
And Fancy wake up from its dream?
And smiles, like rainbows melt to tears?

* * * * *

But as we walked where shadows gloomed,
Through sombre trees with mist bedewed,
Where rustling leaves the pathway strewn
And weird shapes through the darkness loomed,
Thinking how bright the sunset shone
Three hours ago, and now was dead—
We, looking up saw overhead
The steadfast stars shine calmly on!



Mother's Summer Song

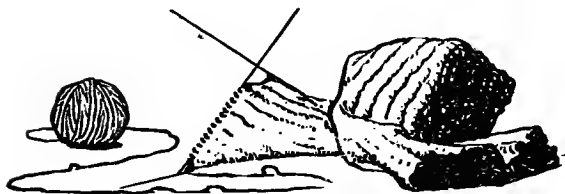
The house is strangely quiet,
And I look up from my chair,
To wonder at the silence,
Thinking some one must be there ;
Then I suddenly remember,
Perhaps a dozen times a day,
That the children are away, of course,
The children are away.

There's a hush within the parlour ;
There's a footfall on the stair ;
The woodshed is a solitude ;
The dog is in despair ;
And what is it that strangely comes
As if some news to say ?
Why the children are away, of course,
The children are away.

Mother's Summer Song.

Methinks I see them at the door,
I hear them shout and sing,
But, no; of course, they're miles away,
And I'm a foolish thing;
They are playing in the sunshine,
Among the meadows gay,
For, blessings on their bounding hearts,
The children are away!

When they're married all, and settled,
I shall feel like this, I know;
I'll go about the house distraught,
Averse to knit or sew.
I'll think I see them here or there,
And, many a time, I'll say:
"Why, the children are away, of course,
The children are away."



A Japanese Porcelain Bowl

One Jap woman, and eight Jap men—
Watching for spring to come again—
 Encircling the Chinese lily—
That grows in the midst of a tiny lake ;
A tiny, translucent, circular lake.
 In the midst, a Chinese lily.

'Tis a bowl by a Japanese artist made ;
In it will spring, and bloom, and fade,
 The delicate Chinese lily.
But the one clay woman, and eight clay men
Will be there long years beyond my ken.
 Dead and gone the Chinese lily !

For into their clay was breathed the soul
Of the queer Jap artist who made the bowl
 That holds the Chinese lily.
And the soul withstood the fires of hell,
So now they stand around and tell
 How they will outlast the lily !



Imagines Vitæ

Man's no mere scribe, who in the cloistered gloom
Of some old convent sits away his life,
Who at his trencher finds his only strife—
The rest fat peace—as in his narrow room
He writes till blinded by Time's darkening rheum.
An image rather find in one, who leaving wife,
And child, and friends, proclaims war to the knife
With luxury, and seeks his unknown doom
Among the mountains, where the ages lie
Buried 'neath miles of monumental stone—
Region of distance, height, immensity—
Writes with his heart's blood in those spaces lone
His last sad message. There, where eagles cry,
They find his bones : far still the highest cone !

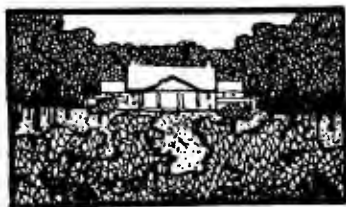




A Photograph in a Shop Window

Through a Gethsemane of city streets,
Whose ministering angels seemed from hell,
And ever stabbed me with their venom'd darts,
Till soul and body writhed in misery,
I strayed—a hunted mortal—sport of Fate.
Then, when 'twas worst, behold thy pictured face,
Calm, peaceful, resolute; thy comrades true
Around thee, “helmed and tall;” ah! then I knew
How angels strengthen us in time of need;
And from thy face drew solace for my smart.





The Lesson of Life

“I am rich at last,” said the magnate bold,
As he turned from his desk one day;
“Broad lands I own, and a mansion of stone,
And a thousand are in my pay,
There was many a prince in the times of old,
Could not say what I can say.

And now that the race of life is won,
I can do whatever I please;
So off I will go and though winds may blow,
I will sail o’er the billowy seas,
For my boyhood’s home—ere a week be done—
Where it nestles among the trees.”

So he came at last to the village old,
And the cottage where he was born:
So silent it stood at the edge of the wood!
With its roses and blossoming thorn.
And though he had houses and lands and gold
He could not but feel forlorn—

The Lesson of Life.

For its pathway was overgrown with weeds,
And its windows were chill and dark,
And his eyes grew dim though a joyous hymn
Was sung overhead by the lark ;
And the sun shone bright on the daisied meads
And bright through the trees in the park.

And he saw the place where he used to play,
And the quaint old garden seat,
And the mossy old well, in the shady dell,
And the brier that smelt so sweet—
But he wished his friends were not all away,
And the people he used to meet.

For nobody welcomed him back again,
And the rooms still and silent were ;
No face at the door, no step on the floor,
No form in the old armchair—
Like a man remote from the haunts of men
He felt, as he lingered there !

But he said, "I am rich, and I can buy
Whatever I please with gold.
I will fill the place with the ancient grace
It had in the days of old.
No merchant my wishes will ever deny,
Nor the talisman I hold !"

So he bought the house, and he filled its rooms
With furniture old and fine,
That brightly shone as in long years gone :

The Lesson of Life.

And each antique curve and line
Was designed by men who in their tombs
Quiet lay, and made never a sign.

And he said, " My friends shall come again,
I will find them wherever they be,
Though they may be far 'neath the Southern star,
Far over the restless sea.
An impossible thing for a host of men
But it shall not be so for me."

So over the land and the tossing main,
By horses and steam he sent,
By road and rail, and widespread sail,
His trusty messengers went,
With gold in their pockets which made it plain
How strongly his will was bent.

And they came from near and they came from far
His friends of a by-gone day,
Well pleased with the plan of this powerful man
Who prepared and paid their way ;
By ocean and steamer and railway car,
It seemed like a game of play !

It was forty years since these friends had met
In the village that gave them birth—
They had fought, and toiled, and wearily moiled
In the rugged ways of earth.
And some among heaps of wealth were set,
And some among penury's dearth.

The Lesson of Life.

And all were wrinkled and gray and old ;
While some that they once had known
And had loved the best, now lay at rest,
And were told of by storied stone.
The heart had been sad of our magnate bold
Had he thought of this alone.

But his house and table were gaily dight,
And they sat them down to feast,
And each of them found as the talk went round,
And their gaiety increased,
That wrinkles, and age, and hair, that was white,
Did not matter in the least !

And they told of the days of long ago,
These merry and glad old men,
Till the glasses rang, and an echo sprang
From the rooms upstairs again—
Like the harp in the air when the wind's faint blow
Awakes in the distant fen.

Then the magnate said, " O friends of my youth
We have wandered far and wide—
Many ups and downs and Fortune's frowns
And smiles we have all well tried.
Now of all these things—pray tell me the truth—
What does steadfastly abide ?"

Then a silence fell o'er the merry board,
And the roar of the laugh died down
And this suggestion, this difficult question

The Lesson of Life.

Immersed them in study brown,
Till every old man looked tried and bored,
And perplexedly scratched his crown.

Till the host, with a gesture said, softly, " I pray
That you will not try any more
To solve this query—it has made me weary
And many wise men before.
But I'll solve it myself in a common-sense way
Though not overburdened with lore.

Why nothing abides in this changeable world ;
Now night and now daylight appears,
Now sunshine, now cloud ; we are cheerful, or bowed
With a sorrow made bitter with tears.
Sails set on life's ocean are speedily furled,
And the seasons soon change into years.

The present—nought else—is ours to enjoy,
And this lesson is taught by life,
That strive as we will with ardour and skill,
There's little to show for the strife.
The boons we have longed for but fade and cloy,
Even loving with hate is rife.

So a toast I give you, my friends of old—
' The Present ! ' so think no more
Of future or past—this moment will last
As long as its brothers before.
You will taste a pleasure unbought with gold
If you drive dull care from the door ! "

The Lesson of Life.

So they each of them tried, those glad old men,
To drive all their care away.
They thought not of self, nor of cankering pelf,
But each was with kindness gay.
And such happiness fell on their spirits then
As would take me long to say.

How long they kept up the merry feast,
Is more than I really can tell,
Their mirth was still high when was heard the cry
Of the owl ; and the midnight bell—
And, for all that I know, it may not have ceased
When the hush of the small hours fell.

They may still with laugh and song I ween
Be keeping the feast up now,
For that party so gay, it was leagues away,
And it needs a venturesome prow
To ride the billows that lie between
Ourselves and that feast, I vow !



Tell Me Not Woman Bad May Be

When snakes in Iceland do unfold,
When snow is warm, when fire is cold,
When mother's truth's no longer true,
And leaves in Vallombrosa few,
Then tell me woman bad may be.

I've talked with many an ancient sage,
I've read in many a mould'ring page,
In many a land I've wandered wild,
And loved all women from a child,
But none of them was bad to me.

Bad woman, therefore, hence depart,
Nothing but empty dream thou art,
The fruit of some half-addled brain,
That scans the universe in vain,
Tell me not woman bad may be.

An angel walking through the dirt,—
What though her mire-bedraggled skirt
Hide somewhat her divinity,
An angel still shall be to me;
Tell me not woman bad may be!



The Mass Bell

I sat where I heard an expounder explain
Many things that have heretofore puzzled man's brain;
The realm of the soul : how mind affects matter,
How creation was doubtful, and much other smatter
That wearied me quite. I had heard evolution
Trotted out as the one universal solution
Of every life-problem, till now, I've some doubt
If even with that we can find all things out ;
Heard old faiths reviled, howso precious their history,
And fun poked at every grave, reverend mystery ;
Had floods of dry talk, very much like vapidity,
Poured over my head with remorseless rapidity,
All to show how great Man and his glorified reason
Were the salt that all earthly corruption should season ;
That t'was rather old-fashioned to look up to Heaven ;
Let him rather live justly each day of the seven :
All this and much more—no longer to dally—
Till I felt like a bone in the prophet's dry valley.
“ Behold they were dry ”—This description identical
Applied to myself in that prosy conventicle.

The Mass Bell.

Then, o'er the spaces of the city came,
Three strokes upon the ancient brazen bell
That hung high up in the cathedral tower ;
And then three strokes again. I knew that there,
In adoration of the Infinite
The kneeling people bowed in humble faith,
With contrite hearts. Straight my spirit fled
And knelt among them—questioning not what creed
They held ; content to bow with those who knew
God present with them ; knelt and worshipped Him.





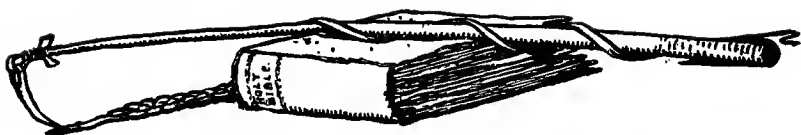
Which is She ?

One day she flouts me with disdain,
Her cheek with anger flushes ;
The next, she strives to heal my pain
And beauteous is with blushes.

Vain, proud, and strident she appears,
On Wednesday say—or Monday,
Yet her sweet charming way endears
Her to me—perhaps—on Sunday.

Which is herself ? I fain would know,
My life quite wretched made is ;
Is she a sprite with heaven aglow ?
Or does she come from Hades ?





Piety and Horseflesh

At Rumti-Tiddle-on-the-Lake a preaching camp was held,
And parsons popular were there, and choirs the anthems
swelled ;

For the giddiest summer-tourists have, on Sunday, a
dim feeling

Of liking—for a change—to have devotion o'er them
stealing :

But the preacher must be famous, yes, the preacher
must be great ;

He must preach his slickest sermon and with pathos
must orate,

Or hosannas on their tongues would languish.

And from the country districts and from townships far
and near,

In buggies and in democrats the farmers came to hear,
The road was dusty on both sides, and dusty in the
middle,

By which they drove long weary miles to church in
Rumti-Tiddle ;

Piety and Horseflesh.

And as the horses, most of them, through all the week
 had worked,
A hatred of the gospel, deep beneath their harness lurked,
And some there were that paced in anguish.

Now Farmer Blank his horse had lived full twenty years
 and more ;
His near hind leg was spavined and his off front foot was
 sore ;
But the farmer started with him, not without an earnest
 prayer ;
For thirty miles he had to drive and wished that he was
 there ;
So as he drove along the road he sang a hymn or two
To cheer that aged quadruped, and gave him whip-lash
 too,
And found the mixture stimulating.

So to the place they came at last : there was a lively buzz,
Enough to try the patience of the man that came from Uz ;
The crush of people to the church and buggies to the shed,
Was, such as might have sent a weaker brother ' off his
 head ' ;
But Farmer Blank was strong in faith, and to the
 crowded wall,
He shoved his horse 'mid seventy more and tied him to
 a stall ;
There was nothing in the manger, not a mouthful nor a
 drop,

Piety and Horseflesh.

But that horse knew well his duty and his master knew
he'd stop
While he on food from heaven was feeding.

But while the anthem and the hymn were swelling loud
inside ;
That ancient and much travelled horse just laid him
down and died ;
Some say that by a neighboring horse he twice was bit
and worried,
And thus unto a painful death his wearied frame was
hurried ;
Others, that when the preacher's voice began with force
to rise ;
The poor old steed's enfranchised ghost soared up to
equine skies,
Where men come not to drive and trouble.

But be that as it may : when all the folk came out,
Emotion's tear upon each cheek, and settled every
doubt ;
And heard the moving story of the long, hot drive to
church,
They said that no such earnest man should be left in the
lurch ;
They passed the hat around at once, and put in coin and
bills,
So now a holy thankfulness that farmer's bosom fills.
For they raised no less than eight-score dollars.

Piety and Horseflesh.

My story now is ended : it but remains to tell,
How a soft and gentle feeling on surrounding farmers
 fell ;
And, the following Sunday morning, the long and dusty
 road
Was filled with aged horses—urged along with whip and
 goad ;
There were some that went on two legs, there were some
 that went on three,
There were broken-winded roarers—some were broken at
 the knee ;
But no man had the luck of Farmer Blank !





Tarot

(An Artistic and Ephemeral Publication.)

SHOT a notion on the wing,
'Twas lively as a sparrow,
But soon it smelt like anything,
I took it unto Tarot ;
I saw a lank-haired, tearful wight,
Who seemed borne down by sorrow :
"The maggots in it are not right,"
He said : "Pray, try to-morrow."

I caught a mournful churchyard ghost,
Who had nor bones nor marrow,
'Come here, thou varlet dim and lost,'
And him I lugged to Tarot.
The lank-haired wight smiled thro' his tears :
"That's more the sort of caper,"
He said—and with his curious shears
He cut a shroud of paper.

Emboldened—to the land of dreams,
And fearsome wild abysses,
I went, and brought home madmen's screams,
And sad, dead women's kisses ;
That wight laughed for an hour on end
Over my well-filled barrow :
"Upon my word," said he, "my friend,"
"You're just the man for Tarot."

Tarot.

“And can you stand like this?” He showed
An attitude most plastic ;
“And let the Universe be blown,
And live in dreams fantastic ?”
“I can, I do, I shall, I will,
Love it like sow her farrow,”
I cried. And now for good or ill
I’m on the staff of Tarot !



Twenty Knots an Hour

Crisp on the wave is the white sea foam,
And the pennon above flies free,
And cool are the breezes that waft us home,
And cool are the seas on our lee,
But it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell :
Shovel on the coal,
Body and soul ;
Shovel on the coal, and make the engines tell !

A sweet girl walks on the captain's deck,
And her eyes are sparkling bright,
And white is her gown that the sun's rays fleck
With patches of dazzling light ;
But it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell :
Shovel on the coal ;
The black and grimy coal ;
Shovel on the coal, and make the engines tell !

There's a teetotal talker away abaft,
And Woman's rights orators three ;
Their tongues go as fast as the steamer's shaft,
If but talk would make people free !

Twenty Knots an Hour.

But it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell :
 Shovel on the coal
 In the red-hot hole ;
Shovel on the coal, and make the engines tell !

There are men of the Rail, and men of the Trust,
 And men with a corner in Wheat ;
There are men who worship their golden dust,
 And lawyers, and men of the street ;
But it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell :
 Shovel on the coal,
 Body and soul ;
Shovel on the coal, and make the engines tell !

There's not a man on the thundering ship
 That's worth this murderous speed ;
There's not a soul with a head or a lip
 Worth a cent—to guide or lead ;
But it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell :
 Shovel on the coal,
 Ram her to the goal ;
Shovel on the coal and make the engines tell !

If they were all sunk in the gray cool deep,
 In a week, pray, who would care ?
It would not alter the world's great sweep,
 If they were away for a year.
But it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell :
 Shovel on the coal,
 Body and soul ;
Shovel on the coal, and make the engines tell !

Twenty Knots an Hour.

What! a fireman's fainted? No. Dead? That's

At peace he must surely be. [well.

For the Lord wouldn't doom a man to hell

That had had his hell at sea.

For it's shovel on the coal in the fireman's hell:

Shovel on the coal,

Give his widow her dole;

But shovel on the coal, and make the engines tell!



The Two Devils

The Devil of Dirt came abroad one day,
Through the streets of a city he took his way ;
—Devil of Dirt,
With ink-black squirt,
What will you do with yourself, I pray ?

“ I will breathe my spells over humankind,
I'll dirty the body, befoul the mind :
In drains and ditches and sewers I'll lurk,
And in homes I will do my deadly work.
Diseases shall flourish, and all shall see,
How dirty the Devil of Dirt can be.”

The Devil of Cleanliness came along,
Singing what seemed a respectable song.
—Devil so clean,
What do you mean ?

And what are the tasks that to you belong ?

“ Whiting the sepulchres over again,
Putting a gloss on iniquitous men ;
Filling the housewife with masterful care,
Till her soul is absorbed in floor and chair ;
Till on every day of the weekly seven,
Her furniture stands betwixt her and heaven.”

The Two Devils.

Then the two fled back on their scaly wings,
Home to the centre of devilish things.

—What ! are you here ?

Said—grim and queer—

Their Prince, as he coiled up his tail in rings.

Then the two who had flown the earthward way,
Gave a verbal diary of their day.

As the Arch-fiend listened, his gruesome frown
Was effaced by a smile from chin to crown ;

“ Each one of you devils has points,” quoth he,

“ You needn’t be proud—but—you’re both like me ! ”



Maud

You are pretty and sylph-like, I know,
And you dress in the latest fashion,
Your head is most charmingly set,
But you never were my passion.

No, Maud! No!

Mince as you go

But I don't care for you, oh dear no!

Sculptors might covet your face,
It would do very well for a statue ;
Painters might longingly rave,
Should they chance in the street to look at you,

No, Maud! No!

With eyes like sloe!

I don't care for you, oh dear no!

When I called on you yesterday,
And found you immersed in a novel,
(A French one) you thought, I dare say,
At your feet I was going to grovel.

No, Maud! No!

Not quite so!

I don't care for you, oh dear no!

Maud.

At the rink you are queen, I confess,
A graceful and elegant skater,
The envy and pattern of girls,
But you hardly would do for a *mater*.

No, Maud! No!
Glidingly go,
But I don't care for you, oh dear no!

To tell you the truth, I'm engaged,
For to-day I popped the question,
And Mary said, timidly, "Yes,"
And fell in with my suggestion.

No, Maud! No!
Let your scorn flow,
But I don't care for you, oh dear no!

She is not so striking as you,
Men do not turn round to look at her,
But then she has feeling and soul,
And a warm little heart—so no matter.

No, Maud! No!
I must go,
For I don't care for you, oh dear no!



The Egotist

Prince-like is his solemn gait ;
Chamberlains might on him wait ;
But his thoughts are all within ;
They are bounded by his skin.
Prouder king does not exist,
Than my friend the Egotist.

How he looks and how he feels,
Are to him great Nature's wheels ;
Let the planets roll in air,
That is nothing ; he's not there ;
His world is within his fists,
My good friend, the Egotist's.

Once I showed him passionate letters,
Writ by one in Cupid's fetters,
All his sweetheart's grace extolling ;
Sad, among his cushions lolling ;
"Is not this a little *triste* ?"
Murmured *Monsieur L'Egoiste*.

Read to him of daring deeds,
Where the valiant patriot bleeds ;
He soon wanders from the book,
Thinks how he himself would look
If for war he should enlist,
And be a soldier Egotist.

The Egotist.

See the tearful funeral pass :
He, a moment, says " Alas ! " .
But his thoughts a quick turn take ;
What a funeral he would make !
How in town he would be missed,
Thinks my friend, the Egotist.

But he's free from Pantheism,
That will never be his schism ;
" What ? Go into Space's sea ?
Lose my personality ?
From such theories desist ? "
Says my friend, the Egotist.



Song of the Factory Worker

From seven to twelve, and from one to six,
I'm bound to the place where machinery clicks ;
And ever along as the slow hours go,
I pass my task-work to and fro.
I measure and cut, and shape and fix,
From seven to twelve and from one to six.

Like a human clock or a clock-like man
I work when the summer breezes fan ;
Like a clock-like man or a human clock,
I work when frosts the streamlet lock,
Looking out on a landscape of smoke and bricks,
From seven to twelve and from one to six.

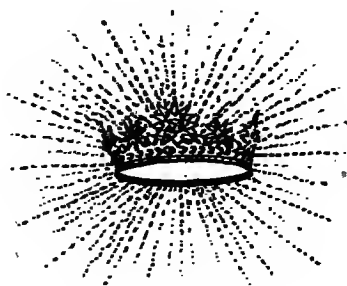
I seem to be grown to this one routine
That's made me into a live machine.
I want no holiday, no, not I,
I'm used to my days going slowly by.
A man must be so, at his work who sticks
From seven to twelve and from one to six.

I'm getting old and my hair's gone gray,
It's "eventide" with me, as preachers say ;
And I sometimes wonder if up in the sky,
When the days of earth have all gone by,
What I'll do when I've crossed what they call the Styx,
From seven to twelve and from one to six.

The Factory Worker.

But I reckon as Gabriel's troop up there
Are regular to the breadth of a hair,
And I've been that, as all will tell,
And timed myself by the factory bell ;
So I'll be right if the hours they fix
From seven to twelve, and from one to six.

And if I can't play a harp of gold,
Or wear a crown of gems untold,
There may be a job on that golden floor
For a man just punctual and no more,
That's been used to cut and shape and fix
From seven to twelve and from one to six.





The Town of Dishmachree

Oh, the sun shines bright with a golden light,
In the town of Dishmachree,
And there's in gineral a glorious fight,
It does a man good to see.
It's none of your sayrious devilment,
But a rale old Irish spree,
Where the heads go down, and the tails go up,
And the old dog's whacked by the short-tailed pup,
That's the town of Dishmachree !

They tried to wake old Mick one day,
In the town of Dishmachree,
They thought he was dead, but he lifted his head,
And what are you up to?" says he.
He jumped from his coffin as mad as a hare,
And floored us all with the back of a chair,
And we ran down the strate as if from the Divil;
"Be jabers," says he, "I'll make you civil,"
That's the town of Dishmachree !

The Town of Dishmachree.

Then his riverence came and sez: "What are ye doin?"

Says Mick, "I think I'll be going to ruin."

"Bad cess to ye, then, ye rank spalpeen,"

And his riverence kicked him just like a machine:

He kicked him up, and he kicked him down,

And he kicked him all around the town

Till he lay in his coffin as dead as a nail;

"There, now," sez his riverence, "now ye can wail,"

So they waked him in Dishmachree!

It's a lovely place and I tell you thrue,

For them as has eyes to see;

And the pigs are as big as cows they are,

In the town of Dishmachree;

With praties so big they're but two to the pound,

And eggs that are more than two feet round,

And whiskey that flows in the gutter before

The front of each honest gentleman's door,

That's the place called Dishmachree!

And that's where I coorted my Norah so fine,

In the town of Dishmachree;

When first I saw her I thought her divine,

And that's what she thought about me.

I thought I'd try one kiss to get,

But she raised a lump—I can feel it yet—

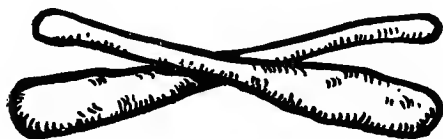
On the side of my head as big as a quart,

So I thought that kiss was dearly bought

In the town of Dishmachree!

The Town of Dishmachree.

So when I get back from the wars, wooroo,
I'll be off to Dishmachree;
Swate peace I'll enjoy and with pleasure I'll toy,
In the best place you can see.
My shillelagh I'll swing and the bells shall ring,
And I'll dance a regular Irish fling,
And break every head that comes in my way,
And tip my cruiskeen every day
In the town of Dishmachree!



A Warwickshire Story

No, it don't seem a year for mushrooms, I can't say I
think as it do,
Though sart'nly we'en got the warmth, and we might get
a drop o' wet too ;
It wants both the warmth *and* the wet, and the one is no
use without t'other,
Summat like Moses and Aaron, either one allus wanted
his brother.

A Warwickshire Story.

'Ave y' heard me tell o' them mushrooms I got out at Knowle ?

Now them *was* the mushrooms ; it ain't a bad tale on the wole ;

I wor fifty years younger then, and me jints wern't so plaguily stiff—

Thank ye, I will have some 'bacca, I allus was fond of a whiff.

Well, yer see 'twas a thisin : at Knowle I was born and bred ;

Feyther had a farm there ; he died of his troubles they said—

Borrering money and such, and mortgating every green acre ;

So I had to come to Brum, and went 'prentice to Allen the baker.

Mother died too; I felt queer when I heerd her was gone,

Somehow my 'art seemed to sink a' me inside like a big stone.

I drored out me batch, and went up a' the loft o'er the stable,

An' cried like a babby no higher than this 'ere old table.

I allus was thinkin' of Knowle ; as the years passed away,

I counted the seasons—the ploughing an' sowing an' 'ay,
But they all was as one a' my bake 'us, twor allus one round,

A Warwickshire Story.

And when work was done I reckon I slep pretty sound.

When I wer nigh twenty-one, a naybour he sez to me,
“Should yer like a trip to Knowle a’ my cart?” sez he,
So we started one morning an hour before ’twas light,
Hawgust the twelf it wor, I know as the date’s all right.

He had some things to tek, we got theer at six o’clock;
Laws, ’ow natral it seemed, it giv me quite a shock,
For we came to feyther’s owd farm, and it seemed as he
must be theer ;
For all looked jest the same, and nothing had altered
a hair.

So us went and delivered our things, and then Jack he
says to me :

“Shall we tek some mushrooms back a’ the cart?”
says he.

I sez, “Yes ; I’ll show you some bigger nor ever you’n
seen,

There they lie,” I sez, “across theer wheer the medder
is green.”

T’wor our dear old farm, I knew every inch o’ the road ;
We drew in, in five minnits we’ed got a cart load,
When who should we see but him as ’ad worried my
feyther,
Him as now owned the farm, and wern’t he hangry jest,
rather.

And with ’im the county perlicem’n, a hignorant dog,
As ’ud cringe to the rich, but ’adnt more ’art nor a log.

A Warwickshire Story.

So I winks to Jack, and "you stop a' the cart," sez I,
"I'll settle *them*, I fears 'em no more nor a fly."

So I goes on gethering mushrooms, and, biling with rage,
The gaffer comes up swearin' dreadful for one of his
age,

And the bobby pulls out 'is 'andcuffs, but I lands him
one 'tween th' eyes,

An' the way he rolled over was proper for one of 'is size.

An' I turned to that bad owd man, and I shook my fist
in 'is face,

An' tow'd 'im if he dain't mind 'e'd lie a' the very same
place ;

And while he was choking with anger, I jumped up
with Jack ;

And we started the 'orse in a gallop, and wuz off in a
crack.

I reckoned them mushrooms was mine, whatever the
lawyers may say ;

And if I'd the chance agen, I'd take some this very
day.

For *them* are the mushrooms, as grow in the owd
place at Knowle,

And thats 'ow I got 'em—it arn't a bad tale on the
wole.



Margaret in the Valley

Amid these grandeurs of the hills,
My love came long ago to me,
And him alone they show to me,
His spirit the horizon fills.

Dark verdure of the solemn pines,
How stern and grave your mystery !
You chant my heart's sad history
In mournful, immemorial lines.

Ye glades that skirt the rocky verge—
That shuts this quiet landscape in
Far from the city's dust and din—
Ye listen silent to the dirge.

But twice a day your peace is vain ;
Broken by steam's o'ermastering throb ;
I hear the imprisoned giant sob,
The long procession of the train.

And once I yearned to hear the roar
That broke the stillness of the lea ;
But since it bore my love from me,
I hate its tumult more and more !

The Enchanted Chair

She sat distraught in her office chair,
And tore her hyacinthine hair ;
For "copy" was slow, and the weather was hot,
And ideas seemed all to have "gone to pot :"
And she frowned a frown and she wept a tear,
And every minute she said, "Oh dear :"
But at last, with a smile she cried "Of course,
Why, I've been forgetting the Psychic Force."

So she lay on the table, and into a trance
She went. Strange lights began to dance
Around her chair as it stood on the floor
While the room grew dark ; and in at the door
Came ghostly figures arrayed in mist ;
(I'll give you presently the list) ;
The first was that old man named Chaucer,
The queerest guy you ever saw, sir ;
He tripped ~~across~~ with a pat, pat, pat,
And down in that woman's chair he sat.

And then came Mr. Will Shakespeare,
Who said : "That I should linger here,
Is, by my troth, most shrewdly queer,
But nevertheless, I'll sit in her cheer."
And then came Jonson—old rare Ben—

The Enchanted Chair.

Who long ago left the haunts of men,
And out of the chair he jostled the Swan,
In turn being jostled by Lord Bacon,
And then came Dryden, and hunchback'd Pope,
And Night-Thought Young, in a very old cope.

And who is this but Dan'l Defoe ?
Exclaiming, " Here's a pretty go.
To be roused from my nap—its as bad as the Plague —
It makes one feel so very vague—
If I've got to sit in her modern chair,
She might have padded it, I'll declare ;
For any ghost of author or bard
To sit in a chair so confoundedly hard,
Is not exactly *comme il faut*,
And I'll tell her so before I go ! "

And after Defoe came Byron, and Burns,
And Scott, and sat in the chair by turns,
And Thomas Moore, and the poet Gray,
And Washington Irving, and Thackeray,
And the last that sat in that armchair was
Our own inimitable " Boz ;"
Who said as he left it, " I will vow,
We've charged her chair with some genius now."

Then she stirred in her trance-atlantic sleep,
And did her hair and a little weep,
Then wiped her eyes and seized her pen,
Sat down and said : " I'm myself again.

The Enchanted Chair.

Ah now I can write;" and she covered reams!
And the newspapers said, "Our wildest dreams
Are far exceeded by this new writer,
A most remarkable inditer,
Her words that flow so thick and fast
Embody the style of the noble past."
So she kept on writing without remorse.
For she knew the secret of Psychic Force.





Misunderstanding

Do you remember those two racing trains—
That sped like arrows from the Tartar's bow—
Through gleams of wintry sunset? How they both
Flew; and each Cyclopean driver threw his soul
Into the furnace?—piled on coal and curst
If t'other drew ahead? O friend of mine,
Do you remember how the smoky steam,
That each was raising, covered everything,
And hid each from the other? So in life,
Sometimes; the throb and stress of travail hide
The heart, and faith, and tenderness of friends.





Poplars

O you know why the poplars are whispering,
As they stand in their serried row,
With a gentle bow and a rustle,
Like the ladies of long ago?

In each is a spirit imprisoned,
That stretches its phantom hands,
And utters its grief to its neighbour;
Its joy that none understands.

They gossip at early dawning,
When they wake from the sleep of night,
Along the row goes the chatter,
And the laugh of joyous delight.

They gently smile with the zephyr,
They scream with the howling blast,
They weep sad tears with the rainstorm
When the black clouds hurry past.

Do you know why they whisper together
In the early morning gay,
While aspens bend low to listen—
Do you know what the poplars say?

“She was here in the dusk of the moonlight,
She was here amid glimmering flowers,
We knew her deep heart in a moment,
And she could interpret ours—

Poplars.

For she spoke in our ancient language,
We answered : ' Come nearer, sweet,'
And she thrilled us from root to leaflet,
While she trembled from brow to feet.

She set us free from our prison,
And we fled on the wind away,
Far over the lake's wild spaces,
Far over the ocean gray.

But we found there was none that knew us,
And none that could understand.
Astray in a world of strangers,
We fled over sea and land.

And so in the hush of the midnight,
We came to our prison again,
And the birds sang a benediction,
And the aspens chanted ' Amen.' "

* * * * *

All day long are the poplars calling,
Every sigh is a whispering prayer ;
Will she hear it, and come in the gloaming,
To the spirits that wait for her there ?



Comradeship

When you ascend the higher hills,
And dwell in upper air,
My spirit with your rapture fills
And feels that you are there.

And when you walk in clouded gloom,
And doubts black shadows throw,
And grim shapes through the darkness loom,
I taste your hours of woe.

The satyr-shapes entice me, too,
The angels beckon me;
The murky gloom I also rue,
The heavenly heights I see.

So in the murk you hearten me;
Could I thus hearten you,
The darkness far away would flee,
The skies be always blue.



Scarboro' Heights

Wash, gentle waves upon the sandy shore,
We scarce can hear your ripple and your splash
Far down there o'er the cliff; and thou, vast Lake,
Spreading thy mysteries to the horizon's verge :
Now dark, now bright, now wimpled with the wind—
Image thou art of calm, eternal rest,
A deep where frets and worries all are drowned,
Where thought floats out upon a barque of peace
To havens where at last the soul would be—
Thou givest grandeur to this pleasant scene,
Where through the gentle woods the sweet airs come
To fan our faces with their zephyr breath,
As we, down-seated on this grassy space,
With legend, song, and jest let go the hours.

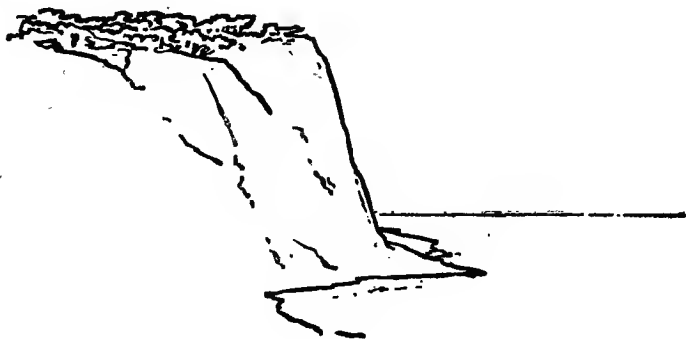
There's a sail o'er the waves afar
Gleaming, gleaming :
There's a light o'er the sandy bar
Streaming, streaming,
And the cloudlet sweeps o'er the azure deeps
Dreaming, dreaming.

The crowd might envy us this afternoon
Did they but know our blissful, cool retreat ;
But we, retired from all the world's harsh noise,
Keep holiday. Nor only with conceits
Of frolic jesting pass the golden hours,
Our Nestor stands upon the hoary cliff
And spite of that last milestone passed to-day—

Scarboro' Heights.

His sixty-third—in manly voice declaims
Byron's resounding and historic line,
That finds an echo on the wave-beat shore ;
And he of sable garb, and speaking eye,
Takes us in verse to India's storied land,
Then thrills our beating hearts with tragedy.
With Graces three to wait upon our needs,
Nay four—say rather five, and even six—
Our woodland meal speeds bravely : Friendship spreads
Her winsome charm o'er all : makes sweet the cup,
And decks the board with bounty. Then the sun
Gleams westering through the sympathetic trees,
And, 'neath the splendours of the evening sky—
Amber, turquoise, and pink of heavenly rose—
We wander home through twilight's poetry.

July 22nd, 1895.





Revised Proofs

I watch the printer's clever hand
Pick up the type from here and there—
Make it in ordered row to stand,
And gather it with practised care.

Maybe t'will make the poet's page,
The leaf of some romantic book,
The sheet that chronicles the age,
The tome on which the sage shall look.

But ah ! not yet ; full well he knows
No printer lives from error free ;
And in those neat and serried rows,
Are letters that ought not to be.

He takes his proof-sheet with a sigh,
Deleting here, and adding there,
Till not the keenest reader's eye
But must confess the whole is fair.

And shall the pages of our lives—
Letter by letter daily set—
Be subject, when the end arrives,
To no revising process yet ?

Revised Proofs.

Sometimes our eyes are blurred with tears,
Sometimes our hands with passion shake,
Sometimes a tempting Devil leers
At all the errors that we make.

Forbid, O God! that work so vain
Shall stand in an eternal scroll—
With faults of sin, and joy, and pain—
As long as future ages roll!



Not for the Few

Not for the few, but for the crowd I write:
For those who, like myself, have weary trod
The road mired by the feet of multitudes;
Let idle people shun these simple lays.



To an Artist

PROLOGUE.

With much good will, and craft of studied art,
You drew my picture ; on my wall it hangs
And pays a tribute both to you and me ;
Yet leaves me in your debt. Why should not I
Draw yours in words ? Not that the debt corrodes
My spirit, as one owed my tailor might,
Or a bank overdraft ; but that I feel
An impulse to repay in kind : perhaps,
A dim unspoken feeling that the art
That draws in words may emulate the art
That limns with brush or pencil. Yet can I,
A tyro of the pen, though growing gray
With using it, hope thus to body forth
Just what I would, when words evade, elude,
And vex us with their contrariety ?
The task is hard ; but, otherwise, t'would not
Be worth the doing, or the acceptance, done.
Behold then, I begin my written page,
To paint you, as you are, with only words :
So, at some future time, when both of us
Are wandering spirits in the vast of soul,

To an Artist.

Or reincarnated, some one may say :
“ This charcoal sketch is he—drawn by his friend,
Whom he too drew in verse—these are the lines.”

THE PICTURE.

A man compact and equal to his fate,
Calm, self-reliant, who has seen the world ;
With pulses cool and unimpetuous,
Nor overborne with surges of desire ;
Fancy enough to light the landscape clear—
Not to suffuse it with a glorious haze
That changes it from what it really is
Into a flood of rainbow colouring
That hides its cruel rocks, and with delight
Veils all its pitfalls : a true Englishman,
Yet no cool cynic. In his way, devout :
Knowing the higher things that round us float ;
That this great world is greater than ourselves ;
And that far off must ever rise the ideal.
A man of breeding ; one of whom you say,
“ He had a gentle mother, and a sire ;
And not a little owes he to past years
And generations.” He, with rare good sense,
Has found his limitations, and delights
To gladly recognize that in their range
Exist the makings of a worthy life ;
Not one who strives impatient to his verge,
Grumbling at what he feels he cannot do,
And ever longing for the impossible.
A man who loves his kindred and his friends ;

To an Artist.

Regards the world as, on the whole, a world
That well will serve his turn and bide his time :
Not to be died for, but just lived in well :
A theatre in which to play a part ;
And not a lost and sinking entity
He must drag out of hell with blood and tears
Or lecture on its danger ; as if God
Had laid the saving of the world on him.

Delve I too deep ? Look then at his outside :
A stature—not of overtowering height—
I pity those big Anaks of mankind
Whose brain informs but weakly their long limbs—
Such is not he, but as if nature sought
In him to show a power condensed and firm :
The force and wit of nerves sublimed—distilled,
And put into small compass, what, spread out,
Would make a giant ; yet no dwarf I sing :
No Aztec pigmy ; but as tall as he
Who conquered Europe in the early days
Of this last century—Napoleon :
His form well-modelled, upright, and well-poised,
Inured to horsemanship ; a healthy brown
Arrays his firm-cut cheek, and brown his hair
And fine. His dark eye, merry-glancing, shines
Ready for joke and quip, and quiet gleams
Of humour and narration leave his tongue
And scintillate, inviting repartee.
In minor things he is conventional,
Pays due respect to laws of social grace ;
Passes Bohemian antics with a smile
(Whose craze is rudeness, and whose cult long hair)

To an Artist.

He is too strong for affectation's gauds,
Nor does he think the cut of hair and beard
Essential to true art ; but shaves, and wears
His coat and collar like the Christian man
He is, and pleases well his tailor too.
What his expression ? Keen, alert, alive ;
Less sleepily reflective than awake
To all that passes ; a calm confidence
In his own powers pervades his countenance,
Yet not unduly. When he speaks, his voice—
A manly baritone—rings clear and true
And when he sings he moves your very heart.

EPILOGUE.

Thus I've essayed with some temerity
To paint the painter, whose firm, potent brush
Gives to his sitters immortality,
And who with equal calm and patient art
Paints beauties, cits, and statesmen as they are,
Bequeathing them to hazy centuries.
As he, too, knows the agony of verse
Thus showing art, and song, and music one—
He may with toleration read these lines.

Christmas, 1896

As fades the winter day across the vale,
So fades my life-day, passing all too soon,
The dawn long past—'tis now but afternoon.
The creeping shadows and the light grown pale—
The presage of the night—might make me quail ;
But that true friends bring back the glow of noon,
And that young hearts give me love's priceless boon.
While these are mine how can I sigh or wail ?
Precious as gold such benefactors are !
With jocund converse we will cheer the way,
And though the dark fall o'er the sky afar,
Our hearts are strong : our footsteps shall not stray.
And see ! There gleams on high the Christmas star !
Foretelling still a brighter, happier day !



